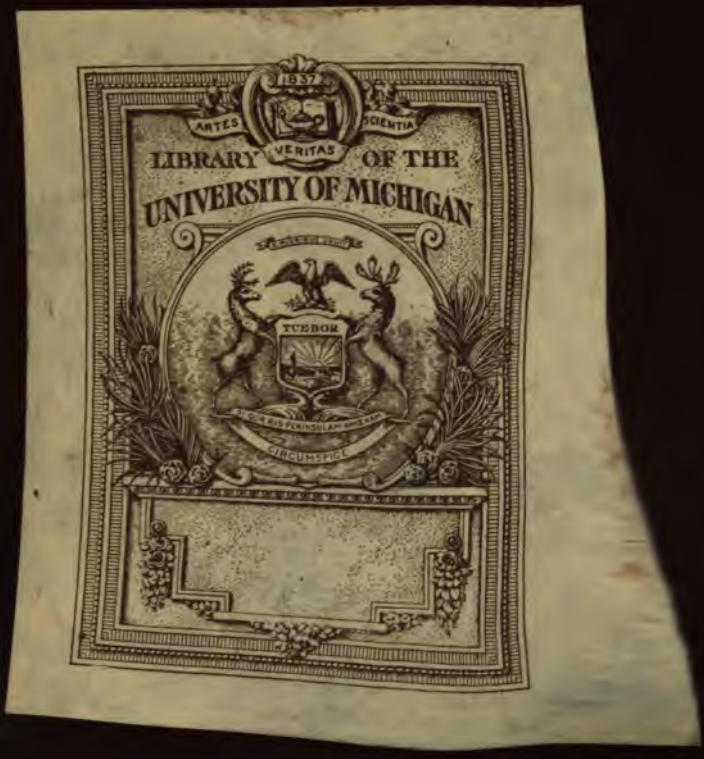
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JOHN STUART BLACKIE

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John Blackie

JOHN STUART BLACKIE

A BIOGRAPHY

BY

ANNA M. STODDART

NEW EDITION, WITH PORTRAIT

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS
EDINBURGH AND LONDON
MDCCCXCVI

DEDICATED

TO SCOTS

IN

ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

THE writer wishes to acknowledge her great indebtedness to Mrs Blackie, who not only intrusted her with the letters, MSS., and papers from which the biography has been compiled, but has shown the most constant and helpful interest in the work; to Dr Stodart Walker, who supplied her with notes on the Professor's relations with the students of Edinburgh University, and on the incidents of his last illness; to Professor Mackinnon, for many facts connected with the founding of the Celtic Chair; to Professor Cowan, for his reminiscences of the Greek Class, and for information referring to the Travelling Greek Scholarship; to Dr Donaldson, Principal of the University of St Andrews, for information with regard to University Reform; to Dr Forbes White, Mr Burness, Dr Gardiner, Mr George Seton, Sir Arthur Mitchell, and other friends of Professor

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The writer has taken advantage of the present edition to revise the whole very carefully; to make use of the many valuable suggestions to which the circulation of its earlier editions gave rise; and to correct slips in the original work.

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JOHN STUART BLACKIE.

CHAPTER I.

PARENTAGE AND CHILDHOOD.

1809–1819.

In England the middle classes can rarely boast of connection with a romantic past. Their progenitors may have been worthy, capable, useful in their day and generation, but how seldom have they left traditions stranded on the flats of present provincialism. Whatever their local worth, the grandfathers of a middle-class Englishman inspired no ballad, as warriors on the moorland in the wake of a ruined dynasty—as martyrs in the lowland singing the psalms of the Covenant while Episcopal bullets whizzed about their ears. In Scotland, the blue blood of a squandered loyalty, of a faithfulness unto death, whatever the cause, fills the veins of the middle classes. Their ancestors were Jacobites or Covenanters, and so, even unto this generation, men are to be found inheriting their strong individuality, refusing the dull canals of conventional life, and working their way in self-worn channels, through obstacles as unrelenting as their granite rocks.

Perhaps for lack of "causes" the Scotchmen of to-day are growing tame, but the men born within the first quarter of this century were still endowed with free gesture and plain speech, and through their hearts ran rills of poetry from the springs of ancestral suffering.

From a stock of solid Borderers John Stuart Blackie took his name and something of his nature. He says himself:—

> I desire to thank God for the good stock-in-trade, so to speak, which I inherited from my parents for the business of life. My father was a man of great vigour both mental and bodily, made mainly for action and enjoyment, but with a discursive habit of thought, a turn for philosophical speculation, and freedom from all narrow ideas. He had great sagacity and knowledge of the world. My mother died when I was twelve years old, and I remember her only as everything that was womanly and motherly. I have no doubt I owe much of what is best in my moral and emotional nature to her.

His great-grandfather was a native of Kelso in Roxburghshire, and cultivated a strip of ground, his own property, which stretched between the Tweed and the high-road on the eastern outskirts of the town. He married the daughter of Mr Stevenson, who lived at Galalaw, an extensive farm tenanted by himself and his forebears for a century and a half. Three sons and three daughters grew up in the Tweedside home, and found callings and husbands within Kelso and its neighbourhood. The eldest took to business, and became a wine-merchant in the town. A much-respected family of Stuarts was resident in Kelso. Father and son were doctors, and were descended from a line of doctors. An old lady of the family used to say that thirty-two Stuarts of her race were doctors. A current of Highland blood ran in their veins, they could relate exploits of Jacobite forefathers, and they held their heads high. The Dr Stuart of something more than a century ago was

assisted by his son Archibald, and had a daughter called Alison. Some kinship existed between them and the Blackies, and the wine-merchant fell in love with his cousin. Old Dr Stuart forbade the marriage, but the lovers braved his ire and made a runaway match. Their married life was shadowed by straitened circumstances, and by estrangement from disapproving relatives; but Mr Blackie died, and as Dr Archibald Stuart had succeeded to his father, also dead, he offered a home to his widowed sister and her two children. The widow soon died, but Dr Stuart brought up the little Alexander and his sister with his own children.

Alexander was clever, and took kindly to Latin at the Kelso Grammar-School, whose boys played under the shadow of King David's stately abbey. He was possessed of fitful energy, and took interest in many matters—in antiquities and gardening as well as in his lessons. His cousin John, the doctor's son, was his companion and playmate; but although gifted with a vein of caustic humour, and of sterling rectitude and ability, he was sober-sided compared to the mercurial Sandy.

When school-days were at an end, Dr Stuart found an opening for his nephew in a Glasgow house of business, and he was despatched thither to learn the mysteries of manufacture, although tradition tells not in what kind. But his temperament recoiled from the unrelieved drudgery, and he accepted a situation in a bank, where shorter toil left him leisure for other pursuits, and where he acquitted himself so well that he was made an agent before he was twenty years old. Stern Presbyterianism prevailed both in the Stuart household and in that of his Blackie cousins, who were useful Kelsonians and growing in consideration amongst their fellows. But the wilful Sandy had moulted some feathers of that sober plumage, and vexed his cousins

with bold questioning of the minor observances and with untoward whistling on the Sabbath-day. These signs of licence ruffled somewhat the peace of his holiday visits to the Blackies, but they were ready to grant that he was a pleasant fellow and did them otherwise no discredit.

Having reached a modest position, it is not wonderful to find that he promptly took to himself a wife. The lady was Miss Helen Stodart, and she was twenty-two years old when Mr Blackie married her in 1807. She was the eldest of three sisters, and the daughter of Mr William Stodart, an architect at Hamilton, who designed two of the bridges over the Clyde, one at Glasgow and one near Hamilton. This Mr Stodart was descended from a branch of the Border family of Stoutheart, which had settled in Lanarkshire early in the seventeenth century. Its kinship with the Selkirkshire branch is evidenced by the singular likeness between the descendants of both branches—a likeness maintained in mental and moral characteristics, as well as in stature, complexion, and other physical features, to this day.

A succession of Stodarts, christened James, occupied the Lanarkshire property of Loanhead for nearly a century. The James of 1740 or thereabouts sold Loanhead and settled at Walston in the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire. The eldest of his seven sons rivalled his kinsman, "the Beetle of Yarrow," in size and strength, and was known as "King of Covington," where stood his farm. It was at Covington that Burns supped and slept on his memorable journey to Edinburgh, and on the following morning he breakfasted with James Stodart, another of the seven brothers, proceeding to Carnwath, where he lunched with John Stodart, the banker there. William was the second of these brothers. He was born in 1740, and in 1782

married Christian Naismith, whose forefathers deserve a word of chronicle.

Two staunch Covenanters head the roll, James and John Naismith. The former was minister first of Dalmellington, and then of Hamilton, from 1641 to 1662. He was a man of note, trusted by the Scots Parliament for various duties, and, says Wodrow, "he was reckoned a very good man and a good preacher." He proved himself of sterling gold in the furnace of persecution, for he was thrown into prison in 1660, the year of the Restoration, one of the first to suffer for the Covenant. Persecuted for a time, he was at length driven from his charge; but, so far as we know, both he and his brother John, in spite of twenty-eight troubled years, lived to a good old age. John too suffered imprisonment, although not until the reign of James II., and both were harassed by repeated fines. A daughter of the Reverend James Naismith married her cousin, who was John Naismith's son, and this couple, John and Janet Naismith, lived at Allanton, and brought up in godly fashion, and in the memory of grandparents of such honourable record, a son, John Naismith, afterwards of Drumloch. He married in 1731, and his family consisted of a son and three daughters, of whom the youngest was the Christian Naismith of our story. Mr William Stodart died a few years after his marriage, and his wife survived him for only a short time. When she died, their little girls, Helen, Marion, and Margaret, were adopted by relatives on both sides. The uncle Naismith took Helen, an aunt married to Mr Hamilton of Airbless gave Marion a home, and Mr Stodart welcomed the little Margaret to Walston. The Drumloch house was hospitable, and there the sisters often met. Helen, the eldest, grew up in the congenial atmosphere, a tall and graceful girl, dark-haired and dark-eyed, her face beaming with kindly smiles, a great reader

and a cheerful talker. An old servant described her as "a pairfit sant." But although of orderly habits, she was not fond of dress, and rather eschewed society, which interfered with her reading and distracted her thoughts. Her uncle was a man of ability, loving Greek, Latin, and French, and having some taste for research. He was able to help Sir John Sinclair in 'The Statistical Account of Scotland,' and wrote several books himself. We are told that, like his forefathers, he was a man of goodly presence.

From time to time Helen went to Airbless to visit her aunt and sister, and there, amongst the occasional guests, she met Alexander Blackie. He contrived to make himself agreeable to the gentle Helen, and an attachment grew up between them. The young banker was handsome, well-built, self-confident, and so far successful. The touches of dogmatism which mark the manner of youth offend only the old, and if to these he added some flashes of quick temper, the uncles and aunts alone took warning. So in 1807 the young people were married, and took up house in Glasgow, where in 1808 their eldest daughter, Christina, was born, and on July 28, 1809, in Charlotte Street, their eldest son, John Stuart Blackie. Friends gathered to his christening, and amongst them was the cousin from Kelso, now a young doctor, assisting his father, and in due time to succeed him—and after him the baby was christened John Stuart. Some homage, too, was doubtless paid to the memory of a line of Naismiths, from John the Covenanter to John the scholarly Laird of Drumloch.

In 1812 Mr Blackie was appointed manager of the Commercial Bank at Aberdeen, and thither they removed and settled in Marischal Street about the close of the year. As John grew from infancy to childhood the

banker's nursery filled, but only five of his first family reached maturity.

From his earliest years John developed from within outwards, accepting no guidance of a coercive character, and flatly declining to be taught the alphabet until he affected letters. His father made many futile attempts, but he refused to be wiled from the attic, where he and his sisters revelled in improvised sports, sometimes theatrical, often oratorical. He filled the house with noise, a kindly, merry child, much liked by his nurses, whom he harangued from the top of a chest of drawers. His father was fond of Shakespeare, and John picked up scraps by ear, and declaimed them in the nursery with abundant gesture. But the psalms and hymns carefully administered on Sundays found less response, until the metrical version of the nineteenth psalm pleased his ear, and he learnt it by heart. This seems to have been the only mental feat which he performed in his childhood. But already his character showed its bent, and his mother wrote when he was about eight years old—

> John is all consideration. He is possessed of a good deal of the milk of human kindness. He is rapid in all his movements and methodical to a fault. Nothing that can be done to-day is put off till to-morrow. He is now happy in the present, anything new rather vexes than delights him. His character will depend much on the society he forms in after-life.

And she adds, her perspicuity something clouded by her failures on Sundays,—

> If it is good, I expect to see him a fine young man, pushing, and fond of money, but not with much religion about him.

At this time he did not know his alphabet, and a lady experienced in teaching was asked to beguile him through this displeasing portal into the halls of learning She thought to teach him with a box of ivory letters, and

arranged them as toys full of promise; but John flung them out of the window, and declined to be fooled into lessons.

In the same year, however, a new school was opened in Aberdeen. Professional society had grown to be dissatisfied with the grammar-school, and took some trouble to establish an academy, at which the mind might be cultivated and the manners not neglected. Mr Blackie was one of the gentlemen interested. They rented a hall in the Netherkirkgate, and fitted it up with all school requirements. An excellent master was secured in Mr Peter Merson, a classical student then mounting the slow rungs of Church preferment, and a Mr Bransby was engaged as usher.

John was sent to this school, and came first under Mr Bransby's care. The discovery that his schoolmates could read and write was sufficient shock, and he was soon diligent enough. Mr Bransby died a few months later, and John was transferred to Mr Merson's class. Here he was expected to begin Latin, and refused to do so. Mr Merson understood the boy, and left him to take to it spontaneously, from which point he made rapid progress in his school-work. Some twelve or fourteen boys were in his class, and in the *vivâ voce* examinations with which the master began each morning's work, young Blackie soon distinguished himself. His memory was strong from the beginning, and he gained smartness by doing his lessons aloud, in his own fashion, learning Latin by the ear as well as by the mind. "Merson's scholars" were a trial to the neighbourhood, as the Academy had no playground; but although John could run and shout with the best of them, he seems to have avoided all rougher pranks. Once he was challenged to fight by Alick Dunbar, but he declined on the ground that human beings were not intended to

collar each other like dogs, adding, "Although I won't fight with you, I'll knock you down," and this he did to the admiration of his schoolfellows, who counted his courage duly proven. A first acquaintance with the heroes of tradition and of history impressed him greatly. At nine years of age he accepted the postulate of the future apostle of strength, and went about the house shouting, "Father, for the nine hundred and ninety-ninth time, I tell you there is nothing like uncommon strength."

Mr Blackie, elated by his rapid progress, wished him to learn music and dancing about the time that Latin had lost its terrors. A teacher of music was instructed to give John lessons in the violin, but the little scholar's arms and hands were not adaptable, and he protested so vigorously against his lessons that they came to an untimely end. Nor did dancing suit the free play of his feet and legs, and when the weekly lesson was due, John was wont to hide himself and so escape its tortures. On one occasion Mr Blackie dragged him out of a cupboard, and marched him off to the dancing-school, holding a cane in reserve for the first sign of mutiny; but this took time and trouble, and the father had to give in, and to content himself with the fact that John was generally dux at the Academy. Mr Blackie was particular about dress, and John was not. A smart suit of silver-grey cloth with rows of shining buttons was chosen for him, but caused a tempest of despair in the boy, who refused to brave the jeers of his class in such unacademical splendour, and the fine clothes had to be kept for James. So he grew as much as possible in the free exercise of his own will; and in spite of his repugnance to his father's dilettante tastes, his truthfulness, kindliness, industry, and sunny humour made him the favourite at home.

He was no reader at this time. He learned his lessons

thoroughly, singing them through the house, and already marching up and down with that coincidence of mental and bodily activity which never left him; but when he knew them, the hours to spare were filled with original sports. The attic, where he and the little ones were at liberty, was decorated with playbills,—his fancy elaborated their suggestions, and he wove in what scraps of Shakespeare and psalmody he knew, devising strange plays, which he and his sister performed to an audience of nurses and children. Christina was John's most capable playmate. Opposite the house stood a theatre, and every evening these two watched the people going in, with wistful eyes, wondering if it would ever occur to their father to take them to the play, but not venturing to expose their longing to his banter. He never did take them, but sent them to the circus sometimes, and the feats of riders and clowns led to hazardous imitations at home.

Mrs Blackie's cousin had married Mr James Wyld, afterwards of Gilston, and then residing at Bonnington Bank, near Edinburgh. In 1819, John, just ten years old, was invited to spend the August holidays with his cousin Robert Wyld, a year older than himself Robert was in low spirits at the prospect of going to the High School after the holidays. He hated Latin, and, alas! Latin and Greek, with a little arithmetic and small doses of the weights and measures, made up the too solid educational diet of that famous place. Mr Wyld tried to rouse his boy's emulation by praising John Blackie's ardour for Latin, but Robert refused to believe in it, till one day, hearing strange sounds which came through the open library window into the garden, he peered in to find his cousin, a thin little lad with sharp features, shouting out

at the top of his voice, with the broad sonorous vowel-sounds taught in Scotland, the rules of syntax from the Latin columns in Ruddiman's 'Rudiments.' To be so employed on a holiday visit argued a power of principle which impressed the dejected Robert for his good.

CHAPTER II.

AT SCHOOL AND COLLEGE.

1820–1829.

I MIGHT wish to retain for ever the mixed elements of youth and manhood that belong to middle age,—to the season between twenty and forty,—but I never could seriously desire to have been eternally a boy. A boy is a fruitful thing for a thoughtful spectator to contemplate, but a somewhat barren and a very imperfect thing to be. However, I was quite happy in my boyhood in the measure that happiness belongs to that age, and have not a single memorial sorrow to recall. At school I got my lessons carefully, kept at the top of my class, or quite close to it, and enjoyed peg-tops, marbles, "Robbers and Rangers," and other sports in their season, with that healthy gusto that belongs to all normally constituted British boys. I got my lessons carefully, but I cannot say that this proceeded from any particular love either of books or lessons. I imagine it was merely from the natural energy of my character, with an ambitious impulse that did not like to be last, where there was a fair chance of being first. I was put into a little world—the school—where action was the law, and it was contrary to my nature to be lazy or to be last. I was called upon to act for honour and glory with my equals, and I did my best with decision. That was the whole secret of my school activity.

So wrote the Professor when his hair was white, and, to some extent, his retrospective estimate of the ten-years'-old schoolboy may have weight with us. But already feathery-winged seeds of this and that great influence had

floated within reach of his receptive nature, and had found lodgment there, to sink deep and to grow strong. Within the gable of a house just below the schoolroom in Netherkirkgate was a statue of William Wallace. John looked out on it daily—looked up to it as he came and went from school. The Scottish hero and his story grew into his heart, the biggest lesson he received at Merson's Academy. It was the nucleus from which radiated all his interest in Scotland and her history. Wallace led easily to Bruce; and his knowledge of both was stimulated by his excursions with Mr Blackie, who took the boy with him on his holidays to fish near Kintore or at Pitmedden, in the Don, the Deveron, or the Urie. The memory of Bruce clung to castle and cottage in these districts, and Mr Blackie found eager audience for his tales of the national champions. To be where Bruce had been, to look on Wallace day after day, brought both quite close to John's imagination, which, indeed, they filled for a time. Scotland began to be a holy land for him. Books which told of her trials and resistance grew valuable, and we find him, as the years passed, liking books better, and in his leisure hours poring over Walter Scott's matchless stories, many of which had come out, and over Robert Burns's glorious lyrics. The latter he first learned from his father. Mr Blackie's many gifts included a rich and musical voice; he sang the old Scottish ballads dear to our fathers, and every beautiful song by Robert Burns which had found a native setting. Scottish song and Scottish story took possession of the boy's heart before he left Merson's Academy.

This happened when he was twelve years old, in 1821, a year saddened by his mother's death. Mr Merson taught well, and John's equipment of Latin enabled him to win a small bursary on his entry at Marischal College, which he resigned in favour of a poorer student. But the

grammar-schools and private academies of that time considered the elements of Greek as no part of their curriculum, and schoolboys crowded the classes of the University, whose professors were expected to do mere usher's work for some eighty or ninety students, whose age and acquirements made the title a mockery.

John was overpowered by the transition from a class of twelve to a class of ninety. It was easy to make head against the smaller number in the little Academy, where the capacity of each boy could be quickly gauged; but the resources of ninety were less obvious, and amongst them were many well-furnished scholars from the Burgh Grammar-School, famous for its teaching of Latin, and naturally better qualified to give its pupils the self-assertion needed for contest with numbers. For three years he went to the College, learning his lessons at home carefully, but without any ambitious dream of excelling the rest of his classmates.

Greek, indeed, was scarcely taught in a manner to excite ambition; it was plodding work, and the boy plodded conscientiously and modestly. The Natural Philosophy class, taught attractively by Dr Knight, stimulated his interest and his courage more effectively, and in the last year of his course he took the third prize for mechanics and mathematics. This was due to the teaching, not to any native inclination towards these studies; but he scarcely knew as yet what interested him most, and he was glad to learn what was best taught.

For in Aberdeen during the first quarter of this century the teaching was barren enough. Enthusiasm was banished from both chair and pulpit. The professors were learned but pompous; the preachers were Moderates, and turned out formal homilies, which passed over listless congregations like gusts of an arid wind over a withered plain—

"clats o' cauld parritch," in homely contemporary phrase. Aberdeen was chilled to its centre by Moderatism; it dulled every faculty except those in the service of a dignified self-interest, which the Moderates studiously proclaimed to be common-sense. The boy's three years' curriculum left not a memory behind except this of gaining a prize in mechanics and mathematics.

At home the mother's place was supplied by her sister Marion, and to her kindly care both Mr Blackie and the children owed much. Of the ten children only six had survived—Christina, John, Marion, James, Alexander, and Helen, the last a baby when Mrs Blackie died. Mr Blackie had hardly emerged from the shadow of his loss. He was more solitary than before, and spent his leisure in his study, where he read, and pored over drawers of plaster-of-Paris casts which came from abroad. He fitted up a tiny furnace in his room, and here he fused his metal and turned out clever replicas of his favourite medallions, which he presented to his friends. John's presence was always welcome to him, and the other children were glad when the favourite was at home, as the father was brighter then and more accessible.

He decided that John should be bred to the law, and found an opening for him in a friend's office in Aberdeen, and in 1824 he began his apprenticeship. It lasted only a few months, and of this short experience we have little record. In a letter to his sister Christina, who was now at an Edinburgh school and spent her holidays with the Tweedside cousins, he says: "I am now made a lawyer totally. I like the occupation *pretty well*, and might like it very well, if I could be sure of getting off at two o'clock." But lawyers' work presents no complaisant pliability to young apprentices whose minds teem with other interests. To please his father, John would have gone steadily through

his probation, had not a change of the most engrossing character come over his whole attitude towards life. This was effected by two events, which struck forcibly at his sensitive apprehension and roused the most vivid and serious realisation. The first was the death of his little brother Alexander, who had been ailing for some time. Four little brothers and sisters had been taken before this, but his reflective powers had not till now reached the stage when the full significance of death could excite and occupy them. His kindness to the little ones was a household word; he was never known to be cross in the nursery, or irritable with one of the children. Sandy was seven years old, and had been a favourite of the big brother of fifteen, and now the large place filled by the household pet was vacant, and it chilled his astonished heart, worsted in death's onslaught. In this loss his affections realised the terrific power of death; another event roused his mind to face the fact and ascertain his own relation towards it.

His father had several friends wont to spend an evening hour or two in his study, to which John was now admitted on equal terms. Amongst these was a young advocate, a tall and energetic man, full of vitality, brimming over with good spirits and laughter. He went into the country on some business connected with his profession, slept at a little inn in damp sheets, took a chill, and died of rapid consumption, disappearing from his accustomed place with a suddenness which startled John as if a miracle had occurred before his eyes. The man had been the very embodiment of overflowing health. There had been no natural mounting up to full maturity and gradual decadence to death. In the bloom and vigour of early manhood death smote him and laid him low. That old men should die seemed plain enough; that weakly children should fade from life was grievous, but not mysterious;

but that, after all the preparation which youth must undergo to fit the man for life — that, so fitted and equipped, on the very threshold of usefulness and experience, death might leap from an ambuscade and lay him low—*that* pulled him up from all easy-going acceptance of what to-day and to-morrow had to offer, since the third day might find him face to face with the same dread experience.

His training hitherto had provided him with no foundation of actual creed on which he might have built some jerry philosophy wherein to hide his consciousness of "the terror that walketh by day." His father was not what is called a religious man; his mother, about whose memory there lingers some sweet perfume of piety, was gone; his aunt was very doctrinal, but a Moderate. The boy had to do the work himself, and had to discover for himself what death was and what life, and in what degree the life that now is stands towards the life that is to come. He became absorbed in his task. There could be no knowledge so important as this, none indeed of any importance except this, and so every other interest fell away. Some religious books adorned the circular table in the parlour of state. They were such as respectability deemed suitable for the parlour-table, and, except the hand which dusted them, nothing interfered with their recognised functions. Boston's 'Fourfold State,' the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' Blair's 'Sermons,' were part of this parlour furniture, and John seized the staid volumes, and pored over them at every leisure moment. Shakespeare, Scott, and Burns were set aside, and grew to his anxious young eyes mere fascinating fiends bent on luring him from the one thing needful—his soul's salvation. The things of this world became literally mere shadows to him, if not sins. He had begun to take dancing lessons, that he might bear his part at the little

social gatherings to which he was invited. He left them off, declined all invitations, refused to go to the theatre, abjured all lighter reading, questioned seriously the need of graver reading, and came to the conclusion that since this world and the things thereof must pass away, it was folly to be occupied with any of its concerns. So even Rollin's 'Ancient History' was discarded as profane study. No Bernard nor Bruno could have set the respective claims of this life and the other in sterner antithesis. For through and through the Calvinistic teaching runs the bitter strain of ingratitude for this wonderful and blessed life on earth, for its wealth of good and perfect gifts which come to us from the eternal Father. And this bitterness and blindness are a direct inheritance from the monks of the middle ages, when the times were often evil and hid the working of God's providence.

Had he lived before John Knox, he would have settled the problem for himself, as did Bernard and Bruno; but at a time when there was no shuffling off the mundane coil, he could only hope to get himself saved with fear and trembling by bending every faculty towards the contemplation of eternity and its claims. The lawyer's office became intolerable. Sordid motives and dull handling of money were the sum of its inspiration and activity, and he entreated his father to remove him from an atmosphere so noxious to a soul in travail.

We can imagine the surprise with which the clever, kindly father would contemplate a son of his so abnormally affected, and it speaks volumes for his affection that he made no demur, but consented at once that he should study for the ministry, and enter himself as a student at the Edinburgh University, there to complete his course in Arts before beginning his Divinity. No doubt that, with his sanguine temperament, Mr Blackie foresaw a fine career

for his gifted son: his ready utterance, his attainments in natural philosophy, augured well for his success. At that time, too, there were but four constitutional ministers for the forty thousand inhabitants of Aberdeen, and these were pluralists, most of them combining a chair in the University with a pulpit in the town. The calling had its picked places, and John was sure to mount the ladder which led to them.

Perhaps, too, Mr Blackie was now better able to spare his son, for this year he had married again, and his second resembled his first wife in many important qualities, more particularly in cheerfulness and kindliness. She was a Mrs Patteson, the widow of an officer in the army, and the daughter of a Mr Miller, a West Indian merchant, who lived in Glasgow. Her mother had been James Watt's daughter, and this influence in her home training had inspired her with a great admiration of talent, whether literary or scientific. She became at once attached to the clever Blackie children, and from the first singled out John for special affection. Not a dissentient voice was raised against her entrance into the family circle, and so great were her tact and amiability that "Aunt Menie" stayed on, an essential member of the family, consulted on all important points by both Mr Blackie and his wife, and as influential as either with regard to the children. Her step-children were soon as eager for the new mother's affection and approval as if they had been her own. She added certain personal tastes to the heterogeneous "fads" of the household. She collected old china, and had a cabinet for specimens, which bore the proud name of "The Museum."

Early in 1825 John went to Edinburgh, where he was boarded with a family of Tweedside cousins who had settled in Hart Street. They were a widowed Mrs Blackie with two sons, the elder of whom was engaged in journalistic

work. Besides these relations, whose home he shared, his father's sister lived in Edinburgh, and made him welcome whenever he cared to go to her home in Lynedoch Place. She had married a Mr Gibson, W.S., with whose family John Gibson Lockhart had some relationship, and her two step-sons were one a little older and the other a little younger than John Blackie, so that they became readily his friends and companions.

John was in his sixteenth year when he applied himself to Greek, Logic, and Moral Philosophy, completing the course in Arts. Dr Ritchie occupied the chair of Logic, which Sir William Hamilton was afterwards to raise to European fame; and "glorious John Wilson"—"Christopher North"—expounded the principles of Moral Philosophy.

Of the young student's Greek we hear nothing. He was probably still stumbling along the dreary approach to its well-guarded treasures. But we learn that the storms of anxiety which swept over his mind paralysed its free play in the other classes. Despair had seized him, because he felt no firm conviction that he had passed from darkness into light. Some book, presuming to explain all the counsel of God, had fallen into his hands, "insisting, as an indispensable point of Christian experience, that a man should be able to point out a moment in his life when he passed into a new state, as strongly and strikingly as a child does when it emerges from the darkness of the womb into the proud light of the living and winsome world." Of course the worthy Calvinist, so eager to help his fellows into a ditch, forgot that in the human birth the being most concerned is quite unconscious of the change, and that to many the spiritual life comes likewise without observation. For a long time John Blackie was plunged into mental agony because he could not point

his finger to a date and say, "On this day and at this hour I was born again." It is remarkable that he took these perverted glosses for the Gospel. So tremblingly did he seek the narrow way that he turned down every by-path lest he should miss it, and only when one after another led him into the wilderness did he turn back to where he started, to find at last that the lamp of God's Word alone can light the feet along the way of His commandments.

His step-cousin Archy Gibson was made the confidant of all the turns in this labyrinth. John Blackie seized upon him, and demanded that he too should cast aside every concern which interfered with this the only concern, and Archy was whirled into the vortex of his fervour. The two lads talked together, prayed together, and finally sketched out a course of Bible reading to be carried out simultaneously, whether together or separate. Their reading bade them seek light in service, and it is touching to learn that John, submissive to every mandate, began patiently to visit the sick and miserable in some of the darkest dens of Edinburgh. In and out of the wynds and closes, toiling up to attics in the Cowgate, diving into cellars in the Grassmarket, he spent every leisure hour, seeking God's purpose in regard to him. He was obedient, but not assured; fear and trembling possessed him, but salvation seemed still far off. His scanty allowance of pocket-money was devoted to the sick and dying, and beside their beds he knelt and prayed, and read the Bible. This was religious work; and, engaged in this, he awaited the happy moment of his spiritual birth.

But he lagged behind in his classes, and if some temporary relaxation of his mind permitted him to work for his professors, the interval of relief was soon resented as a diabolic interference with his "soul-concern."

Dr Ritchie interested him in spite of himself, and in his first year at the Logic class he wrote an essay on "Conception" which the Professor rated highly. At the close of his second session, when the inner turmoil had begun to abate, he took the third prize in Logic. His experiences at the Moral Philosophy class were more dramatic. That he was not altogether careless of John Wilson's lectures is evidenced by the fact that in a letter to his sister Christina, now at home and eager to enter into his studies and to make them her own, he drew up an excellent abstract of the Professor's teaching, suggesting books for her use, if she cared to pursue the subject. But in this very letter he admits that his work at College seemed to him to be fleeting and shadowy compared with his search for the sure foundation on which to build the structure of his life.

During an interval of intellectual ambition he wrote an essay for Professor Wilson which gained high approbation. When the Professor returned it he said heartily, "A remarkably clever essay, a very clever essay indeed," and for a short time this tribute pleased him; but the very pleasure became a source of pain, and he shirked every opportunity of reviving it. When the session was over, and he went into the Professor's room to ask for his certificate, Christopher North, looking at him fully with his keen blue eyes and leonine grandeur of expression, said, "What has been the matter, Mr Blackie? There is something here that I cannot understand. You gave me in an excellent essay, one of the best I have received this session, and I fully expected to have you on my prize-list; but you have given me only one, and you know my rule." The poor boy burst into tears. How could he tell the truth to that Homeric hero, who would shout with incredulous laughter at the tale? He took his certificate with drooping head, and walked away. The kindly Professor had made the

most of that one essay on the card, which remains to this day in record of a time of honest anguish.

In his letters to Mr Blackie he avoids all mention of the subject which so engrossed his time, although he expresses regret for his inadequate work at College. His letters are full of details about the wide circle of cousins and half-cousins with whom he came into contact, and who seemed to be getting themselves steadily married or buried. Passages concerning new clothes for either celebration occur, bearing witness to Mr Blackie's care for his son's personal appearance, and to the son's desire to stock his wardrobe scantily, and to be trammelled with no supernumerary coats and hats.

His student life in Edinburgh ended with the summer session of 1826, and Mr Blackie came to visit the cousins and to take John home by the steamer from Leith to Aberdeen. He found his son much changed; a settled gravity subdued the wonted frolicsome spirit; he no longer filled the house with shouting. His sisters could not at first accustom themselves to this sedateness, but his interest in all their higher pursuits was greater than ever, and his brotherly tenderness and helpfulness reconciled them to his entreaties that they should busy themselves most with the life to come. It is difficult to discover how far he influenced them. Christina and Marion were clever girls, and they were at that stage of feminine development which sets high store on intellectual success. His prestige must have suffered from the undistinguished sessions in Edinburgh, but both loved him, and record that he was the kindest of brothers.

He was more successful with his brother James, a boy about fourteen years old, unusually handsome, with dark and dreamy eyes, and features moulded like a Greek's—so much, at least, we may judge from a portrait painted a few

years later by Spanish Phillip. James consented to be taught and stimulated, and the earnest missionary brother read the Bible with him morning and evening, and rejoiced to find response in his sensitive heart.

But even already the tempest within was wearing itself out. It had done its perfect work, and that was to lead after many years to larger, truer views of the purposes of God. Already it had called him, with no uncertain sound, to stand aside from every folly which can betray the soul to the destroyer, and he tells us—

> They had not the slightest attraction for me. I was not happy; I was not wise; but I did not go astray after vanities. I grew up in the atmosphere of purity, which was a rich compensation for all the thorny theology which my morbid subjectiveness and my Calvinistic discipline had imported into it. All my spiritual troubles were, as I afterwards found, only a process of fermentation, out of which the clear and mellow wine was to be worked. With all its sorrows, a youth spent in Calvinistic seriousness is in every way preferable to one spent in frivolity.

When he returned to Aberdeen he found Aunt Menie away, gone to see her relatives in Hamilton. He undertook to send her a chronicle of home news, which she cherished proudly as an archive. This letter illustrates his tendency to subjectiveness. He begins, with a brave effort at self-suppression, to tell her the family doings. These included a visit to a menagerie of wild beasts, to which Mr Blackie had taken his children, poor Marion being left at home to expiate some girlish prank. The account of this visit comes early in the record, and then, alas! for Aunt Menie thirsty for homelier gossip, these wild beasts suggest a lengthy homily, divided into four parts, upon the advantages to be derived from the study of zoology. Two closely written pages, out of the three which form the letter, are filled with weighty observations on this subject, and the honour of the thing had to compensate for their dulness.

When the holidays were over he enrolled himself as a regular student of theology at the University of Aberdeen, as there he could take his full course and remain an inmate of his father's house.

The two professors who chiefly influenced his studies were Dr William Laurence Brown, Principal of the University and occupant of the Divinity Chair at Marischal College, and Dr Duncan Mearns, Professor of Divinity at King's College.

Both of these men were strong Moderates, hostile to the growing Evangelicalism which possessed a number of the younger students, and of which Thomas Chalmers was a powerful exponent. With this Evangelicalism John Blackie scarcely came into contact. His father's friends were Moderates, as were all the professors of note in the University. The only Evangelical preacher who visited the house was a man of small attainments and of sleepy manners, held of little account by Mr Blackie, and not likely to attract his son. Such of his fellow-students as were fervent against Moderatism, carried their arguments about with them more like weapons of offence than prevailing influences, and were seldom intellectually impressive. All that was sober, judicious, scholarly, dignified, was on the side of Moderatism; the Evangelicals were indiscreet, undisciplined, hot-headed, and it was not yet surmised that because they were hot-hearted too, it would be given to them to rouse the sluggard Church of Scotland from torpor to life.

But from these very Moderates John Blackie received enduring lessons, and he records them with full gratitude.

Principal Brown, whose twofold function it was to inculcate Divinity and to improve the Latinity of his class, succeeded at all events in the latter half of his undertaking. Influenced by Holland, where he had held the post of

Professor at Utrecht, he was perhaps the most accomplished Latinist in Aberdeen, where scholarship ranked high. It was as easy for him to think and speak in Latin as in English. It is true that in neither language did his thoughts display much depth, for he was more concerned with the phrasing than with the sentiment; but the ease with which he criticised the essays and discourses of the students in flowing Latin stimulated them to follow his example, and by constant reading and composing to enlarge and practise their vocabulary. To John Blackie particularly the Professor's powers acted as a useful spur, and he determined to follow every method suggested till he should secure a like facility. Once more the house in Marischal Street began to echo to his voice. High-sounding quotations from Cicero, transposed and paraphrased, bore witness to his diligence, and orations in imitation of his favourite author were delivered in the retirement of his room, against a bedpost grovelling in sedition or a wardrobe which revelled in impious luxury and crime. He recognised at once the importance of a method which Dr Brown had imported from learned Holland, and he soon acquired enough of fluency to enable him to risk a critical adventure, which won for him not only the Professor's applause, but a somewhat notable position amongst Latinists at the University.

Every student had to prepare and deliver a theological discourse in Latin, and this had to be prepared without assistance. Before his public criticism of each discourse, Dr Brown was in the habit of asking the members of his class to offer such critical remarks as occurred to them. Unbroken silence had always followed this challenge, and it had become a mere formality. But one memorable day young Blackie rose in answer to its delivery, and began to criticise the foregoing discourse in English. The Professor

brought his fist down with emphasis on the desk: "At hoc non fas est, domine; quæ Latine scripta ea et Latine judicanda sunt." The student expected this, and turned deftly into some well-worded sentences, no doubt in sounding Ciceronian triplets. The Professor was delighted, and John Blackie's position as a Latinist was made. But he was not contented with this success, and continued to think, speak, and compose in Latin until it presented no further difficulty. That this is the right method of acquiring every language, whether living or dead, was borne in upon him from the precept and example of Principal Brown, and it has still to be recorded how steadily he maintained its importance throughout his life.

But the Divinity Professor rendered him further service. His course of lectures was on the body of Patristic lore, and embraced a review of heathenism and its teaching, between which and that of the Fathers a sharp line of demarcation was drawn to define the contrast. Perhaps the subject lent itself to the oratorical displays in which Dr Brown delighted, and swelling words veiled inadequate thought. One of his students has given it on record that in four years of lectures he never once heard the name of Jesus Christ; but then he was an Evangelical, and clearly expected too much. John Blackie was eager to learn, and so he learned enough, no doubt, to set him reading and thinking for himself.

He attended the Divinity lectures in King's College by Dr Duncan Mearns, as well as those by the Principal, and this course was weightier both in matter and manner than the other. Dr Mearns was a man of great ability and of extensive reading. He was thoroughly versed in his subject, and was besides capable of treating it with entire conscientiousness. But his severe and pompous manner, the distance which he maintained between his dignified

self and the raw youth whom he loftily instructed, made kindly discipleship impossible, and when young Blackie from time to time ventured to ask for further light, he was publicly and ruthlessly snubbed. Dr Mearns was a leader in the Moderate party, and as such he descended into the arena of controversy, and published a book giving a fair enough estimate of Thomas Chalmers's view of Christianity, from the Moderate standpoint.

It was from a Moderate that John Blackie got his best and most lasting lesson. He was still occupied with his religious life, although its mental fermentation had subsided to a somewhat dull and moody self-absorption. Still he sought help from this and that writer's interpretation of the Gospel, and laying hands upon a ponderous tome, Boston's 'Body of Divinity,' he proposed to himself to solve the question with the help of the famous divine of Ettrick. One of his father's friends was Dr Patrick Forbes, minister of the parish of Old Machar, and Professor of Humanity and Chemistry at King's College. Moderate although he was, a certain warmth and impulsiveness characterised him, altogether foreign to his pompous fellows. It was a pleasant walk to his manse, and John went now and again to see him, and to convey some message from Mr Blackie. One day he found him in his study, Horace on one hand, the Hebrew Scriptures on the other, seated at a high desk, the walls round him lined with huge quartos and folios bound in vellum,—works classical, scientific, horticultural, and polemical. John had come on an errand of his own, to ask the Doctor about his course of theological reading, and particularly to discover his opinion of Boston's 'Body of Divinity.' His outspoken adviser made short work of Boston:—

What have you to do with books of divinity by Boston or any other? Are you a Christian? What should a Christian read before

his Bible? Do you know Greek? Whence should a student of theology fetch his divinity in preference to the Greek Testament?

The word was opportune and final. The scales fell from John Blackie's eyes.

There was [he says] both sense and gospel here. I immediately flung aside my 'Body of Divinity,' and forthwith got my Greek Testament interleaved, and commenced a course of Scripture study without the slightest reference to the Westminster Confession or any other systematised essay of Christian doctrine.

He was now face to face with divine teaching, which guides each mind by different processes to realise the same great truths, and from that day the well-thumbed Testament lay ready to hand in his coat-pocket.

Take your knowledge of the case from the evidence of the original witnesses, from them directly and from them only in the first place; you will then be in a condition to profit by the observations and opinions of other men, which, without such a previous course of independent training, could only confound and cripple you. This was what my Gamaliel taught me.

To Dr Forbes he owed many pregnant lessons, and towards him his attitude was always docile. A friendship sprang up between him and the sons of Old Machar manse, and this gave him frequent opportunities of seeking and receiving the fresh, suggestive, imperious dicta which the Doctor, half genially, half defiantly, hurled at him about every topic of the day. The Professor's chemical researches had given him more than ordinary insight into the working of the divine energy, and he taught his young friend to recognise it in every process by which the world is maintained and renewed. "Wherever life is," said the Doctor, "God is." The sentence solved much for his disciple. It illuminated a whole horizon dense with cloud, a curtain which had seemed to him providentially dis-

posed, and to be accepted with dumb endurance. And now he found that without an effort on his part the cloud was dissolved and gone—that God was its interpreter, no grim deity who loved to limit and perplex His creatures, but the Omnipresent Wisdom. It was a release from bondage to freedom. In middle life he wrote—

> This absolute and only possible truth I found afterwards in Plato, but it did not appear to me a whit more evident, touched by the imaginative genius of the great Greek idealist, than when it came forth in full panoply from the hard head of the Aberdeen Doctor. Resting upon this postulate, I have since then always looked on Materialism and Atheism as two forms of speculative nonsense, and a firm faith in God was made clear to me as the one keystone which makes thought coherent and the world intelligible.

Many years passed before he realised his full debt to Dr Forbes. He was still under the impression that a learned Moderate might give him a lift on a question of speculation, but he would have scorned to seek his advice on a question of inward and personal religion. It took a long time to teach him that the impulses which develop our spiritual life are as surely correlated as the physical force which is heat, or light, or motion, as conditions decide its form.

Always teachable, although always eclectic, he found here and there the lessons which he needed, gathering them out of the open hand of Providence. Thus Dr Forsyth, the minister of Belhelvie, taught him to use his eyes. He was another of Mr Blackie's friends who took an interest in John, and he helped him insensibly out of the preoccupations which at this time gave a touch of moodiness to his manner. Dr Forsyth was a student of nature like Dr Forbes, physics and botany occupied his leisure, and the young science of geology claimed his

walks about the district, hammer in hand. The flora of Belhelvie hedgerows and fields, the material of Belhelvie dykes—with such homely plants and stones he made his walks a page in God's great Missal, and taught the young friend, who sometimes shared them, to decipher for himself the characters which conveyed His Wisdom, inscribed in stern relief, or wreathed with delicate beauty.

CHAPTER III.

STUDENT LIFE IN GÖTTINGEN.

1829.

THE aggressive element in John Blackie's character was suspended for a time; its energy was concentrated on himself, and although we hear of no peevishness at home, and of no petulant refusal to comply with his father's wishes, everything tends to prove that he was at that stage in growth when the inward life absorbs all vigour from the outer life, feeding upon the very strength which it afterwards learns to direct. Between the two lives there was at present no healthy interchange. He brooded in silence over his perplexities, considering them as all-important; the interests of others seemed trifling, and the seeming sympathy which made his boyhood so attractive was in abeyance. What gleams of light informed his mind had not yet attained to instruct his heart, and although he was never harsh nor deliberately unsympathetic, he was no longer his father's eager companion, the centre and sunshine of the home. Much was conceded to him as student and future divine, but his moody habits excited occasional reproof and considerable anxiety.

He tells us, with tender penitence for these remote

delinquencies, how unsociable he was, how unwillingly he went with his father to fish the Don or Deveron, how he hung back sullenly, singing dully to himself and buried in endless cogitations, how in a room full of friends he sat wrapped up in his own thoughts, humming a tune in most ill-mannered fashion, despising the kindly family life, which seemed to minister nothing to his inward needs.

His course at Aberdeen University was at an end, but he hesitated to take the further steps which should lead to his ordination. His mind had worked itself into a great confusion. With an impulse towards liberty, its fetters clanked at every struggle. He no longer knew how much he believed of the stern doctrines which oppressed him. He was as religious as ever, and practised his devotions night and morning with a melancholy fervour; they had become a kind of fetish whereby he clung to the hope of salvation. But his mind was working on a plane which his devotions had ceased to affect, and he was conscious of the discrepancy. Of unflinching honesty, he recoiled from teaching others doctrines of which his mind had not a full assurance, whose once absolute outlines had grown nebulous.

The father was keenly alive to his son's perplexity, though not admitted to his confidence. His hanging back from the steps which would commit him finally to the Church told something of the inward conflict. He was still too young for the ministry, or at all events he was not gifted with the necessary assurance which is ordinarily the privilege of youth. Mr Blackie called at the manse of Old Machar, and talked the matter over with Dr Forbes. "Send him to Germany," said the practical Doctor; "his jacket wants widening."

His own sons were going to Göttingen, and the two fathers discussed the *pros* and *cons* of the plan to such

issue that Mr Blackie decided to send John along with them. When he was told of this decision, much of the depression which had settled upon him lifted and rolled away. Indeed it was greatly due to the want of stimulating variety in his circumstances, and the unexpected prospect of a new world of men and minds to compete with came like a wind from an unknown shore laden with promise. He felt as if at last he were about to step into life, to use his own limbs, to see with his own eyes, to hear with his own ears. He had exhausted Aberdeen, and his mind drooped for drought; but the little cloud was in the sky, and already he raised expectant needs and hopes to absorb the coming showers. The natural play of his feelings returned, and before he left Aberdeen he was frolicsome, wilful, and happy, as his home had known him of old. He felt deeply grateful to the watchful kindness of his father, which had recognised the emergency and was so ready to provide for it.

Some trembling feminine voices were raised against the undertaking. "Was not Germany," said Aunt Menie, "the home of rationalism, and might not the sound Calvinism with which he had been inoculated suffer some dire change which might lead him dear knows where?" Black thoughts filled her mind, not to be allayed by any laughter—perhaps only paraphrases of her womanly wish to keep John at home and see to his shirts and stockings and occasional ailments.

He left home about the middle of April 1829, John and Francis Forbes going with him. They stayed ten days in Edinburgh, delayed by violent east winds, which prevented the sailing of the packet from Leith to Hamburg, in which their berths were taken. The sight of these berths provoked much dismay, and they spent a day in futile searching for a larger vessel. The leisure in

Edinburgh was put to use in collecting letters of introduction from every available source. Mr Henry Glassford Bell, then the editor of the 'Edinburgh Literary Journal,' and acquainted with Mr Blackie, proved very helpful in this quest, and took John to call on many noteworthy citizens of Edinburgh, amongst others on his old Professor, Christopher North, whom they surprised in *déshabille* at his writing-table, stimulating the muse with snuff, which lay spread out on the table ready for use. A sheaf of useful documents represented the harvest of these busy days, and amongst them were two letters for Rome, which indicates that already the father's plans included Italy in the tour.

At length, on April 23, the packet sailed, but the east wind was still too violent to admit of its passage down the Firth, and it sought shelter at Burntisland amongst a little fleet of wind-bound vessels. The delay gave occasion for an excursion and some merrymaking amongst the party of five passengers who occupied the dismal cabin. One of the two strangers proved to be a Hamburg merchant, and John struck up an acquaintance with him at once, and began to practise upon him the few phrases of German which formed his small capital in that language. The good merchant humoured him, enlightened all three on some of the non-academic duties and endurances of student life, and gave them a letter of introduction to friends in Dresden.

On the 24th the wind slackened, and the packet ventured on its voyage, but hardly had they cleared St Abb's Head when a heavy gale swept down on them, and did not improve their opinion of the accommodation which the little packet supplied to its unhappy passengers. But the storm was weathered, although it kept them out at sea a couple of days beyond their time, as the captain

would not venture on the perilous navigation at the mouth of the Elbe while the landmarks were obscured by tossing waves, and there was risk of their being driven on some shoal. Heligoland was passed at last, a pilot shipped, and they sailed up the Elbe at full speed, both wind and tide in their favour. It was a rough outset, and they were glad to step ashore at Hamburg.

Here John wrote a detailed account of all the incidents of the voyage to his father, who had impressed upon him the importance to the home circle of frequent letters, filled, not with lucubrations, but with mere objective descriptions of places, people, and experiences encountered. This injunction, piously obeyed, enables us to follow the young Aberdonian abroad with satisfactory accuracy, although his minute record must be condensed with some regard to the proportion which these vivid years bear to the rest of his life. Their very vividness, however, attests their powerful influence on the man whom—along with his heredity, patriotism, and faith in God—they emphatically compacted. The John Stuart Blackie whom we know would not have existed without them, and they are the key to much in his character and opinions which we should otherwise find inscrutable.

After spending a week in Hamburg the three companions began their journey to Göttingen on Wednesday, May 6, about three o'clock in the afternoon. The only conveyance was the mail-coach, and the roads between Hamburg and Lüneburg, a distance of thirty miles, were miserable. When the wheels of the lumbering waggon were not sunk in sand they were plunged in water—a succession of sandy wastes, interrupted by pools of water, representing alike scenery and highway. They were shaken and jolted and crowded for these thirty miles; but after Lüneburg the roads proved better, and they

could begin to enjoy the novel circumstances. The distance of a hundred miles between Hamburg and Hanover was covered by ten o'clock on Thursday night, and they were glad to make a stage on soil which in a sense was native ground, the capital of his Britannic Majesty's Hanoverian kingdom.

But the journey had introduced them to a party of Göttingen students, who like themselves were making their way to the University. These were delightful fellows, overflowing with good-humour and *camaraderie*. They spoke no English, it is true, and the Scotchmen came quickly to the end of their courtesies in German; but a medium of intercourse was found in Latin, which John Blackie had made so far his own, and which the rational pronunciation in use at the Scottish Universities enabled him to wield intelligibly to his new acquaintances, whom he found nearly as fluent as himself in the language. Where Latin failed them, French filled the gap, and he was glad to hear their German songs and witticisms, and get used to the rollicking gutturals. Their company made the long journey endurable, and a prompt acquaintance was established with the band, to be renewed at Göttingen when they met a few days later.

The three Aberdonians stayed two nights at Hanover, but found it lacking both in beauty and interest. They continued the long journey to Göttingen on Saturday morning, arriving that night. They went to an inn for a few days, spending the following Monday and Tuesday in a search for lodgings. There was some difficulty in securing a set of rooms suitable for a party of three. The whole of Göttingen laid itself out to house students, but singly, or at most in pairs, so that they were not installed till Tuesday evening in a suite of rooms, which comprised two bedrooms and a large sitting-room. The scale of their

expenses is a thing of the past, even in Göttingen. Breakfast, dinner, supper, beer, tobacco, and lodgings cost them about twelve shillings a-week each. Their dinner came from a purveyor to the students, and arrived at mid-day in hot dishes—soup, two kinds of meat, vegetables, sweets, and cheese, for something under sixpence a-head. A pleasant German damsel waited on them, and helped them to pick up the language of everyday life; and they found amongst the minor conveniences of their housekeeping the rare luxury of a pair of sugar-tongs, which gave them an air of princely distinction when their fellow-students came to drink coffee.

Letters from Aberdeen soon reached John Blackie, and brought discomfiture with them. His father, over anxious for his progress, demanded that he should on no account take up house with his friends, as it would stand in the way of his rapid acquirement of German. Here they were, housed and happy, and the fiat came upon them like a thunderbolt. So John sat down to convince his father that they gained rather than lost by sharing each other's initial difficulties. They studied with a competent master from six to eight hours daily; they spoke German to each other, imposing a fine of two *Pfennige* for every relapse into English; they read only German newspapers, and they conversed for hours over their beer and tobacco with students of some years' standing, who could enlighten them upon all their privileges—and all this at the end of one week's residence in Göttingen. The same letter describes their combats with such bold Teutons as ventured to overcharge them. Like worthy Aberdonians, they quickly learned to express a resolute suspicion of every price imposed, and to find out the minimum cost of every necessary article. The letter ends with a pæan in praise of beer and tobacco. Its plea obtained, and they were left in peace.

As soon as he could manage a fair mouthful of German, John matriculated as a student in the philosophical faculty, and without an hour's delay began to attend lectures. The course to which he devoted himself especially was Professor Heeren's "Political System of Europe," but by the rule of "hospitising" practised in the University, he found himself free to visit the classes under Hausmann, Blumenbach, Ottfried Müller, and Mitscherlich. By diligent use of the Professor's 'Handbook,' by regular attendance, and by unremitting study, he soon began to follow with ease, and to receive with astonishment, and with some indignation, the impressions which the ample culture of a German University was likely to make on the hungry mind of a Scottish student tantalised with the meagre diet at Marischal College. Professor Heeren's lectures covered the whole area of European history from the time of the Reformation to the end of the eighteenth century, and were not only grounded on his immense knowledge of the subject, but revealed a method of treatment which was entirely new to the Aberdonians. His class was credited with having outgrown crass ignorance, with knowing already the histories with which he dealt, and therefore with being in need of no hammering at a sequence of facts—a part of their instruction which belonged to the school, and not to the university. He grouped their knowledge, interpreted its connecting influences, displayed the relations of one State to another, the living unity which interpenetrated the whole system, the inevitable development which the three centuries had witnessed,—suggesting and combining in the masterly manner which Continental historians had acclimatised long before it was adopted in England.

Heeren himself was a pleasant, genial man, advanced in years, but energetic and hospitable, who received his students on Sundays, and made the Scotchmen welcome

with the rest. He conversed with them in English, which he spoke fluently. His well-stocked library, his simple home-life, his immense learning, his industry, his devotion to the work allotted to him, made a profound impression on John Blackie. Here is a man, he realised, who lectures not once or twice, but five times a-week; who lectures not for five but for ten months every year; who studies and restudies every part of his subject, not contented with the vast learning which he has already accumulated; and who, conversant with every new aspect of his work, handles the whole with such ease and strength as to rouse the minds of his students to the liveliest interest and exertions.

Acquaintance with other Professors, to whom he had brought letters of introduction, revealed a similar industry, accuracy, and learning, a like simplicity of life, and in the case of several a European fame. Such were the naturalist Blumenbach, the philologist Ottfried Müller, and the historian Saalfeld. The first received the young Scotchmen kindly, made them welcome to come to him when they cared to do so, and astonished them by his copious knowledge of English. He was eighty years old at this time, but lectured on the different departments of Natural History to large classes. His library included books in every European language, and they discovered that the most recent English treatises on science were not only there, but were already well conned, while his own treatises entitled him to be considered the first authority in Europe upon his subject.

We have the following portrait of Ottfried Müller in Professor Blackie's "Notes":—

I recollect calling upon him and finding him in his study, in the midst of quartos and folios in all languages. He was a tall, blond, blue-eyed, open, cheerful, intelligent, fine-looking fellow, and moved about with the litheness of a young tiger; but the elasticity of his bodily motions was in nowise connected with any mere skirmishing

quality of mind. In mental calibre he was as massive as he was limber; he could drag after him a whole train of heavy artillery with no more labour than it costs a common man to move his finger. This was my first impression, and acquaintance with his work—of which I had no knowledge at that time—has made the original impression stronger. I do not know that any of the great German philologers had a more rich, graceful, and various sweep of living erudition. He wanted only a longer life to have contested with Wolf and Boeckh the highest honours of scholarship in the most scholarly country of Europe in the nineteenth century.

Professor Saalfeld, too, received them kindly, and poured out such a torrent of English that the Scotchmen were bewildered. It was his manner in every language which he spoke, and they found his German overpowering. The weather at this time was bad. "Göttingen weather," said the Professor,—"eight months of winter and four of no summer. We are having our no summer now — a most excellent thing for a University; the worse weather, the more study. Keep house, and study, study." And indeed it has been hinted by Universities less renowned, that Göttingen owes its learning to its weather.

Two months of such experiences taught John Blackie what learning really was, and gave him once for all a right conception of the professorial office, its duties, devotion, and dignity.

With reference to our Scottish system of education, the scales fell from my eyes. I perceived that at Marischal College they had degraded the University pretty much into a school; that they drilled boys when they ought to have been stimulating young men; that our academical system was prominently puerile, and our standard of attainment lamentably low. I burned with indignation when I thought of these things, and from that moment became a University Reformer.

Prompt to let those know his mind who needed it, he set down his indignation on a sheet of foolscap, and posted it to an Edinburgh editor. This was Mr Henry Glassford

Bell, who published the letter in a summer number of the 'Edinburgh Literary Journal.' It was the first sound of the trumpet blown just as he ended his twentieth year. Throughout his life its blasts were reiterated wherever there were men to listen.

While he was roused to deep admiration of the teaching system and massive learning of the German University, the fervour which kept him true to his devotions was wounded by its indifference to religion. His companions and he went regularly to church, and were astonished to find that some fifty persons formed the ordinary congregation, that few of them were students, and that the sight of a Professor in one of the pews was still rarer than the sight of a student. Something like one-twelfth of the number of students went occasionally to church. For the rest, and for these ordinarily, Sunday was a day of pleasure or of study. Amongst those who habitually avoided church, free-thinking was prevalent, and it gave him keen pain to discover that some of his most admired Professors were outspoken rationalists. The Botany class went for its excursions on Sundays, led by the Professor, whose work was so interesting that but for this consideration he would have enrolled himself upon the list. In Göttingen itself the pulpit utterances were meagre, but he found that by making a Saturday afternoon excursion to a neighbouring town he could stay all night and hear a spirited discourse by an earnest preacher next day, walking back to Göttingen that evening.

He relates a few experiences at the convivial meetings of the Burschen Clubs, but neither he nor his companions seem to have frequented them. They visited the Professors who invited them, exchanged tea and coffee drinkings with congenial fellow-students, took long walks on Saturdays when the weather permitted, and on other evenings

after their day's study made the round of the town ramparts for rest and fresh air.

The rain, which persisted throughout these summer months, increased a tendency to cold in the head, to which John Blackie in his youth was somewhat prone, and details of which Aunt Menie extracted from him in postscripts to his letters home. His own buoyancy and eager enjoyment of work would have led him to ignore such paltry matters as the little ailments which dog our youth, but Aunt Menie attacked the subject categorically, and insisted upon a precise report. So we learn that he was far from well at times, but that he did the best that a poor male could do, separated from his own experienced womankind, to keep dry and to eat wholesome food.

His letters are full of pleasant humour, and bear witness to his affection for the home circle, and to a great deal of longing to know fully and particularly what things affected its every member down to Baby Gregory, whose pet name was "the Pope." He wrote bright notes to each of the children, taking trouble to print them for those who could not read writing, and going into every detail of their interests, encouraging his sisters in their venture into Latin and their study of history, and poking fun at James, whose mistakes in French were a family topic.

Mr Blackie was exacting about the length and punctuality of his letters, and John submits to him a humorous plea for consideration should these be delayed a day or two beyond the appointed fortnight, and deprecates the gathering cloud of "black thoughts," to which each member of the family was sure to contribute some imaginary disaster, as—

That I have studied myself to skin and bone over old musty German books; that I have drowned myself in the bathing-place here; that

I have fallen over some steep precipice, or lost myself in some forest in the neighbourhood; that I have become disorderly, and, having made riots in the street, have been thrown into prison or expelled the University; that I have offended some of the students, and, as a punishment therefor, have got my nose or my cheek cut off in a duel; or, finally, that some inundation of the Leine has hurried me down extra-post to the mouth of the Elbe. I humbly petition that these and all such Black Thoughts may not be admitted till, at least, four weeks have elapsed between my letters.

The "two female pillars," as he calls them, were concerned about his social appearances, and desired that he should become acquainted with the wives and daughters of these o'er-learned Professors, that his manners might benefit as well as his mind from his visits to their homes. To relieve their anxiety he gives in a letter written on August 22 an account of an evening spent at Professor Blumenbach's, when the old naturalist was holding a formal reception, and when he, John Blackie, was introduced to a very charming young lady, with whom he held converse in the German tongue for an hour and a half, but upon what subjects he roguishly declines to state. But, he assures them, the circumstance was not without a fine effect upon his bearing and appearance.

The lack of robust health alarmed his father, who began to plan for his transference to the south of France, in the hope that a better climate might help him to throw off the persistent cold in the head, which acted as a drag on his advance. But John implored him not to exile him yet from Germany: he was willing to go to any other German University for the winter session, for, he admitted, the climate of Göttingen was clearly hurtful to his health, but he could not bear to forego his contact with the treasures of learning, which he had only just begun to appreciate. Several letters were exchanged on the point, and it was left in abeyance subject to his consulting the best doctor in

Göttingen, and to the effects of a walking tour which he proposed to make in the Harz district. Dr Conradi supplied pills in large quantities and approved of the Harzreise; so about the middle of September, when the summer term had ended, the three friends set out on foot to undertake the first part of the expedition together. John, who had an extended tour in view, sent a box on to Leipsic, and, knapsack on back, started for the beautiful Hanoverian Switzerland. By this time he closely resembled the German student whom he so much admired: his classic features, long brown hair, and slight energetic frame, the learned gravity of his face in repose, its mobility when excited, the unshackled movements of his arms and hands, with which he talked as vigorously as with his tongue, and his garb, more convenient than fashionable, all bore already the impress of his contact with Göttingen life. The costume of the three travellers included, besides the knapsack, a waggoner's smock, which was worn over the ordinary clothes to protect them from dust, and which, being washable, was a very useful garment. A flask for brandy was worn on a strap slung round the neck, and for all articles else, except the spare shirt and tooth-brush which the knapsack held, they trusted to such towns as lay in their route.

They left Göttingen on the morning of Friday, September 18, and walked as far as Osterode, a town lying immediately under the western ridges of the Harz, and twenty-five miles from their starting-point. Here they spent the night, and climbed up to Clausthal on Saturday morning. They inspected the mines there, John conversing freely with the miners, and eliciting facts of some interest about their busy, contented life—amongst others, that one of their number was chosen chaplain, and that every morning before they descended to their work he read prayers

and a sermon. They returned to Osterode for Saturday night, and on the following morning the little party was divided, the two brothers making straight for the Brocken, and intending to pass without further delay through the district, while John Blackie had made up his mind to take it more in detail, and to visit particularly every one of its celebrated mines.

But we cannot follow him by every road and rest of his pilgrimage. When he returned to Göttingen, he was refreshed in mind and recruited in body, and the "stuffed head" had yielded to constant fresh air and walking, so that he looked forward to a winter of vigorous grappling with the different subjects at which he proposed to work. All difficulties with the language were over, and he was now in case to storm the citadel of German erudition.

But, alas! much consultation had been in progress at home, where anxious imaginations, engaged on the state of his health and the Göttingen weather, had exaggerated both to their utmost, and on the day of his return came the domestic ultimatum, which required immediate packing up and transference to Berlin. This was a blow, as John had meditated much upon his winter's work, and had dreamt of distinction in spite of every difficulty. But there was no alternative; and so, after many farewells and much natural regret, he started in the mail-coach which left Göttingen on the 30th of October, four days after his return from Saxony.

CHAPTER IV.

STUDENT LIFE IN BERLIN.

1829-1830.

PROFESSOR SAALFELD gave him a letter of introduction to Professor Raumer at Berlin, and he carried with him other introductions both to Professors and to residents in the capital. His journey was uneventful. But Eisleben and Mittenberg, as he passed through them, provoked glowing apostrophes to "undaunted Martin Luther," although it was eight o'clock on Monday evening when they stopped to change horses and to sup at the latter town. The wide plain which stretches towards Berlin was veiled by night, and he was glad when, at six o'clock on Tuesday morning, the coach passed through Potsdam, and an hour and a half later drove along the Leipziger Strasse and landed him in Berlin.

Two hundred miles were covered in the thirty-six hours. He stayed three days at an inn, spending most of the time in a hunt for lodgings. His father wished him to live if possible in the house of one of the Professors, and so to obtain all the advantages of intercourse with an educated German family; but Professor Raumer, whom he consulted on the subject, assured him that such a practice was

unknown amongst the Professors. The intention had to be abandoned, and a search for rooms to be substituted.

It was not till Friday, November 4, that the search was successful; but by the evening of that day he found himself installed in most comfortable rooms in a house in the Luisen Strasse, for which he paid no more than thirty shillings a-month. During intervals snatched from house-hunting, he had managed to matriculate at the University and to take tickets for four courses of lectures. These were chosen partly for the sake of his prospective profession and partly in furtherance of his own inclinations.

His knowledge of German was now sufficient to leave him unhindered in his choice of subjects. That great service, amongst others, Göttingen and his pedestrian tour had done for him, aided by his own ardour. He was quick to make acquaintances, and so preserved his fluency, and he was prepared by severe study to raise the standard of his knowledge to that of the most learned and classical authorities.

At first he felt exiled in Berlin, away from his companions and plunged amongst strangers, in a larger city, where the University was only one of many interests, not the sole concern of every individual as it was in Göttingen. The students in Berlin were scattered, and were not bound together by the ties of common circumstances and mutual dependence as in the smaller city, where they were a compact body animated by one spirit. His share in this looser organisation gave him a sense of loneliness, which one circumstance and another served to dispel, until he rejoiced in the greater variety of interests and in the less trammelled freedom of his own activity. The kindness of his landlord was one of the first reconciling influences. This gentleman had been an officer in the army, and he now employed the leisure of his retirement in elaborating various military

inventions. He and his wife were interested in their lodger, and showed him many friendly attentions beyond his stipulated requirements. When his books were unpacked and the business of the session was begun, he pulled himself together with that wholesome attention to what was presently in hand which characterised him, and useless regrets expired at the contact with new and vivid experiences.

The lectures which he attended were those of Professors Schleiermacher and Neander for Divinity and Church History, those of Professor Boeckh for Philology, and those of Professor Raumer for History.

Schleiermacher impressed him greatly, and he attended his sermons in the Trinity Church, as well as his academic lectures. He did not attain to personal acquaintance with him, but enjoyed his lectures on the Epistles to the Corinthians, and described their tendency in a letter home as orthodox doctrinally, and as quiet and winning in style. In the pulpit Schleiermacher was an effective preacher, and did much to awaken the religious sense amongst the educated classes. His finely cut features, his grace of delivery, and his clear, emphatic pronunciation, neutralised the effect of his deformity. In a discourse on "Great Men," with which John Blackie favoured his aunt, he pleaded for her tolerant and unprejudiced estimate of the famous German divine.

He is anything but a sceptic, deist, or neologian. I have no doubt his orthodoxy might even go so far as not to offend the old wives in the Glasgow churches.

Aunt Menie had been agitated by certain blasts of the Calvinistic trumpet against German rationalism, and had conjured her nephew by the names of Andrew Thompson and "Dissenter Rose" to turn a deaf ear to Schleiermacher and Neander. To which he very pertinently replied :—

As to what Andrew Thompson and "Dissenter Rose" may say, I do beseech you mind not a word of it till you have learned from a trustworthy source that these gentlemen are thoroughly acquainted with the German language, and have patiently and attentively studied the works of the German divines.

Neander's lectures were concerned that session with the Papacy in medieval times, and he unravelled its complications with unsparing hand. But he lectured besides on the Gospel of St John, and for the first time John Blackie heard that Gospel expounded, not merely as a supplementary Life of our Lord, but as a deeply spiritual expression of His mission and message. He was much attracted and impressed, and sought Neander's acquaintance. A certain tender ardour in the matter and manner of his discourses suggested the apostle and evangelist himself. But his bodily presence was feeble, and he fluttered from his house to the University like a "pithless straw"; yet no man was more venerated by the students. He received the members of his class on Saturday and Sunday evenings, and John Blackie went amongst the rest. At one of these meetings Neander came up to him, and asked him many questions about Scottish theology. He broached the subject of Sabbatarianism. "You have some Jewish notions in Scotland with regard to the observance of the Lord's Day." The remark staggered the young Scotchman, and he muttered some helpless reply. He tells us—

I was startled to be told for the first time that one of the most significant observances of Scottish religiousness was not Christian but Jewish. At that time, to my mind, Scottish theology and Christianity were convertible terms, and the severe notions of my countrymen forbidding not only work but also amusement on the Sunday, a point in which they go beyond both the letter and the spirit of the original command, were so rooted in my mind that I could on no account go to the theatre or the opera on a Sunday. But I never had any cause to regret my conscientiousness. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin."

Nevertheless, Neander's question led to a long train of serious meditation, and in after-years to a deliberate study of the whole subject of Sabbatarianism, which resulted in a perfectly clear appreciation of the value and consecration of the day of rest.

For the present, while intellectually unsettled on this and other doctrinal questions,—and it was well, for so he attained larger and truer views of religion,—his heart and practice were evangelical. He never failed to go to church on Sunday, abstained on that day from all forms of work and amusement, except a walk for the sake of his health or a sober visit to Professor Neander, studied his Bible and particularly his Greek Testament, and attended the communion of the Lord's Supper in a Lutheran church behind the University.

He was so far interested in Professor Raumer's lectures as to give a sketch of them in a letter home. They treated of English history, and particularly of the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Two years earlier Mr Henry Glassford Bell had published his masterly defence of Queen Mary Stuart, and John Blackie regrets that it was not known in Germany, where Schiller had given vogue to the theory of Mary's guilt, and where historians like Raumer based their acquaintance with Scottish history on the writings of Hume, Robertson, and Buchanan.

Ottfried Müller had given him an introduction to Professor Boeckh, which was entirely successful. The great philologer, whose reputation as the collector of ancient Greek inscriptions was at that time at its height, proved a most kindly and entertaining host, flinging aside the learning which he wore so lightly, on the occasions when he received his students, and keeping them in continual merriment with humorous stories and passages from Sterne or Smollett, which he

read aloud with much spirit. His academic lectures were on Tacitus, but he went into every particular with such erudite minuteness that during the whole session the class accomplished only one book of the history. This was a little disappointing, as John Blackie had only a single session to spend at Berlin, but in later years he appreciated the lesson in close and effective study.

These classes at the Friedrich Wilhelm University by no means exhausted the studies undertaken for this winter. He made the acquaintance of a young theologian, a proficient in Greek, whom he engaged to read Homer with him four times a-week. They translated into German, so that from their work he reaped a double benefit. He soon made friends amongst the students, and with one of them he concluded terms of mutual edification. He undertook to teach his friend English in return for five hours' weekly help with the German classics. The contract repaid both, and on John's side led to a careful study of Goethe's 'Faust,' while we find him brushing up his own language for the benefit of his friend. To make his lessons better, he studied the pronunciation of English as given in Walker's Dictionary, and so began a habit which outlasted this necessity. Throughout life he took pains with his pronunciation, and while never forfeiting the unadorned simplicity of Scottish intonation, he accepted the best authority as his guide in accent and quantity about all words apt to ring uncertain changes on Scottish lips. He writes home describing the new aspect of his own language as a subject for such study, and it is evident that by this time German had become the easier form of expression.

In view of his travels in Italy, he had thoughts of adding to this well-filled time-table two hours weekly

at Italian, and he did add lessons in fencing, although they were rather for the sake of his health than for further accomplishment.

His health continued to show the benefit of his autumn tour. Only the cold in his head returned with the winter's work. His anxious father insisted on his consulting a doctor, and he tells his experience with merry relish and constant assertion of his own wellbeing. A friend recommended Dr Behrens, who lived in the Dorothea Strasse.

That's most capital, and just behind the University. I can manage the business in five minutes' time, and then in the evening, when I write my letter, I shall have something to say of the doctor and his prescriptions. But it most unluckily happens that there is a classical book-shop there, where Greek, Latin, and German books can be procured at a moderate price. Into this shop I went, and found several books for which I had been looking weeks before. Now there happened to be only a single louis in my pocket. This I had destined for the physician, at least part of it. Here therefore was an auction in my head, the books and the physician bidding for the louis. The claims of the one were in my estimation much greater than those of the other: the consequence was, the doctor lost his prey.

Finally the visit was effected, and Dr Behrens and his lively patient were mutually diverted. He did his father's bidding, but assured the doctor that he was quite well. The cold in his head was, however, sufficiently in evidence to require a prescription, and Dr Behrens ordered a vapour bath and daily exercise. As his lodgings were a mile away from the University, he found it difficult to wedge in a farther walk, so he compromised the matter by taking fencing lessons twice a-week, as already stated, and these calling for considerable muscular play, dislodged the enemy for a time.

His letters intimate that a change, of which he was quite conscious, was coming over his views of secular life.

This was the very change desired by Mr Blackie, who had seen his son gradually forfeiting certain powers of mind and temper by brooding and self-concentration. His horizon was contracted, not because he selected the most important in preference to the subordinate interests of life, but because he selected the former at the expense of the latter, and failed to see that all the energies with which we are endowed are good, and that our study must be how best to use all, not to employ some and disuse the rest. Mr Blackie and Dr Forbes believed that, thrown upon his own resources, his mind would regain its equilibrium, and that healthy enjoyment would take the place of which a moping self-sufficiency had deprived it. Perhaps, too, the wise father saw that something of this moping self-sufficiency was due to the unremitting vigilance of a too anxious family circle. All young natures shrink into themselves and become partially paralysed under the discipline of domestic nagging, and there is no doubt that the very pride and affection of which he was the centre at home took too constantly this form. He alludes to it playfully in one of his letters, and bids the "female pillars" take note that he is now a travelled fellow who knows the world and will wear his knowledge with some dignity when he returns, with mind and manners polished beyond their ken.

In one respect his practice indicated this change. He began to frequent the excellent Berlin theatre, scrupulously avoiding the Sunday performances, but attending on those week-days when the play was either Goethe's, Schiller's, or Kotzebue's, the last dramatist being then counted of classical rank. He found himself in this way agreeably introduced to some of the masterpieces of German literature, and profited too by the pronunciation, which was most carefully studied by good German actors.

It was easy to read at home the plays with whose action he was thus made acquainted.

His father, much astonished to hear that he had broken the serious resolves which barred the theatre as a snare of the devil, wrote to ask him what "new light" guided his doings. His answer treats rather of the complete change in his standpoint than of the particular instance; but as the expression of a most important mental transition, part of this letter deserves quotation:—

Powers for whose exercise there is no necessity cannot be developed. If we suppose that a person is naturally of a weak, pliant, and irresolute disposition, timid and retiring, and averse to the noise and bustle of busy life; if, added to all this, he be much given to study, the consequence will be that, though he grow in years, he will not grow in manly decision of character, but will labour under a weakness of active power very ill calculated for enabling him to perform a critical part in the world. In my opinion this was my case. My being sent abroad made me sensible of my awkwardness in active life. At first I could not stand at all on my feet; afterwards I was only able to stagger along, swaying from side to side like a drunken man, very often striking my head against the corners of the streets, and even now, though I at times imagine I can march with the firmness of a soldier who has got out of the awkward squad, yet at other times I am not quite sure whether my head or my feet are uppermost. To a want of firmness when committed to my own charge, I added a profound ignorance of the world into which I was sent. What your repeated advice could not convince me of at home, a little experience abroad has taught me practically. You often told me it was ridiculous for a person to lock himself up in his study and never see mankind. But of all human souls mine was the worst formed to follow such an advice. Abstracted through a course of years from taking interest in the affairs that went on around, accustomed to a sort of internal meditation or rather dreaming, I felt no interest in the subjects with which it was most natural I should have been acquainted. Beyond the page of Cicero and the Greek New Testament I had very little knowledge. I always found it an endeavour to mingle in the passing interests, political, literary, or religious, of the day. But as soon as I came to the Continent and had intercourse with men, was obliged to speak with them as a man if I would not be neglected and over-

looked in society, then I felt the nothingness and emptiness of my mind. But thanks to heaven, who gave a good spice of the Blackie ambition into my constitution, I was not long before I observed my nothingness in comparison with my fellow-travellers. My pride was nettled. For what purpose did the blessed God of heaven give me eyes and ears and hands? Was it only to see old books bound in vellum, to hear theological lectures, and turn over folio sheets of dull pedantry? Or are there perhaps other objects in the world about which it was intended man should occupy his senses? Is it not a most ridiculous thing that a young fellow should have read Cicero's Orations, but not know even the name of one of Pitt's best speeches; that the Bucolics of Virgil should be familiar to a Scotchman who did not know how corn grew in his own country; that I should be able to give an account of Cæsar's victories, but hardly know more of Buonaparte than his name? Such thoughts have often crossed me: I therefore read modern history, picked up information at all hands, stirred up my stagnant soul to take an interest in what was going on around me, by which means I was enabled to keep my head above water.

This letter, which is dated January 18, 1830, concludes with a still graver passage, in which the recoil of his mind from the Presbyterian ministry shows itself very plainly, although it is evident that his desire to please so indulgent a father prevents him from directly intimating his wish to give up the profession. He speaks of his delight in languages both ancient and modern, of his resolve to acquire French and Italian as thoroughly as he has acquired German, and hints at his admiration of the professorial chair. It is evident that he now wished to be set free from the pledges which bound him to take orders, and that he felt the difficulty of subscribing the Westminster Confession of Faith, now that his mind had widened under the influence of German theology. To become a minister of the Church of Scotland he would need to subscribe certain dogmatic articles, for which he found no warrant in his Testament—Calvinism, Anglicanism, and Romanism being all in the same boat as far as

the imposition of an empirical creed is concerned. He felt the impossibility of this, and so began in a manner to negotiate with his father for a change of profession.

But deeply as he was concerned with a transition of such importance, he no longer brooded over his own phases without reference to other people, and this very letter shows how much he desired to know his father's mind upon all the topics of which it treats. An introduction to a worthy Berlin merchant gave him the opportunity for some social intercourse, independently of the grave University circle, and he writes gaily to his aunt of the hours which he spent with various pleasing young *Fräulein* who frequented Mrs Doering's *salon*. In these descriptions he bubbles over with freakish mirth, evidently wishing to pique curiosity at home; but the passages in which he confesses himself bewildered amongst so many beauties exaggerate something his own audacity, because, as a matter of fact, he had still much shyness to overcome in the presence of ladies.

But he was doing his best to find the tact and polish which Mrs Blackie insisted could only be acquired from feminine society; and as the Doerings made him welcome to visit them when he had leisure to do so, it is wonderful how often the busy student contrived to call on the fair Miss Minna, craftily undertaking to assist her in her English studies. To fit himself better for social success, he began to take lessons from a musical friend whom he had picked up during the Harzreise, and whose knowledge of band-music had led the King of Prussia to make him Inspector of Military Bands. The amount of musical attainment in which these lessons resulted was not great, and helped him only to pick out with great difficulty the notes of a melody or choral; but he discovered that he had inherited some measure of his father's voice, and we

find him writing home for "The Battle of the Nile," and other songs in Mr Blackie's repertory. This is the first intimation which we have of his accomplishment of pleasant, dramatic singing, one of the many social gifts which made him afterwards the life of every festive gathering. No doubt the "Battle of the Nile" was much favoured by the Berlin students, burning with hot indignation at the recent memory of Napoleon's savage invasion, which had clouded the life of their patriot-queen, had reduced large tracts of Germany to sterility, and was the scattering of that baleful seed whose produce rose in ranks of armed men at Gravelotte and Sedan.

In furtherance of this social training, his father proposed that he should be presented to the King, which roused a burst of protest on John's part, reminding us of his agonised refusal to go to school in new clothes. He represented the solemnity as hedged about with difficulty, which indeed it was, as costing great sums for ceremonial garments, and as so overwhelming that he, a mere modest Aberdonian, would inevitably complicate his homage with some disastrous clumsiness, and so confound the name of Blackie for ever; and after a short correspondence on the matter it was allowed to drop. Mr Blackie was under the impression that the King of Prussia, like his Majesty of England, held general levees, at which any gentleman properly authenticated might make his bow, and he knew nothing of the triple tier of etiquette which fenced the Prussian Court from all but titled persons and those whom the King desired to honour.

A pleasant young Irishman, Mr Jackson, came late in January to study in Berlin, and was particularly commended to John Blackie's companionship. He was full of vivacity, and having, as he said, "no tendency so strong as that of cutting throats," he meant to go into the army.

Together they spent their short intervals of leisure, and Mr Jackson introduced his friend to an old Scottish lady who had lived thirty years in Berlin, and at whose house he met other compatriots.

Altogether, his residence in Berlin was a bright, profitable, untroubled time, his health nowise injured by the three months of keen frost which characterised that winter, and which, coming after a heavy fall of snow, made the ways impassable for wheeled vehicles, so that sledges filled the streets.

In a letter written early in February, he describes an interesting conversation which he had enjoyed with Neander. Its subject was Dr Paulus of Heidelberg, and his interpretation of the Gospel story according to the "new light" of rationalism, which took all possible liberties with the text in order to rob it of its spiritual significance. Neander described to him how Paulus treated the "one thing needful" alluded to by our Lord in His gentle admonition to Martha. "Dear Martha," he interpreted, "you have indeed shown a laudable diligence in preparing a meal for me. I take it very kind, but you have neglected one dish, which is better than all the rest; this you must also make ready." And Neander added: "What this dish was, Paulus, who is fond of good eating, knows best himself."

He gives an account of the church attendance in Berlin, which compared favourably with what he had observed in Göttingen; but this was not surprising, for in Berlin the pulpits were filled by men of learning and persuasive power, like Schleiermacher and Strauss, who preached in churches crowded to the door.

In February he began to take lessons in Italian, giving himself six weeks to attain as much knowledge of that language as would suffice for travelling needs. His plan

was to wait in Berlin till John and Francis Forbes joined him, and after a few days spent in showing them the sights of the Prussian capital, to start together on a roundabout route for Italy, intending to reach Rome early in May, and there to spend three months, coming north to Switzerland and France for the autumn, and then returning to Berlin. The plan was partially carried out, as we shall see, but Rome proved too mighty a study and too potent a magnet to release him quite so soon.

Early in March he wrote to Mrs Blackie a letter full of gratitude for some words of loving commendation which she had sent him, and which had greatly cheered him. His enjoyment of the advantages which Mr Blackie's generosity provided for him made him very sensible of that generosity, and his desire to profit by them in all ways which were sure to please his father is evident in every letter. That his studiousness, earnestness, and intellectual advance had given pleasure at home this letter testifies, and it must have compensated for many an anxious moment.

In the same letter occurs an amusing passage about women. Perhaps the fair Minna had proved ungracious in a recent interview, for he declares in a burst of petulance that "girls are no better than painted dolls," and then proceeds to elaborate that portrait of his "ideal woman" which haunts the brain of young enthusiasts, with whom, if the marvel existed, they deem themselves quite fitted to mate. He adds the saving clause, however, that if he ever found her, it is a hundred to one against the chance that she would look on him with favour.

His stay in Berlin was wearing to a close. It had been of great service to him. When summing up the results of his student life in Göttingen and Berlin many years afterwards, he wrote—

At the conclusion of the winter session in Berlin I found myself perfectly master of the German language, thoughtfully read in some of the best German classics, and learning to speculate slowly and thoughtfully under some of the best German influences. But there was a want of speciality about me. I was neither a theologian nor a philosopher, a philologer nor a poet—just a young man on his travels learning to live and to feel and to think, with theological tendencies and a possible theological destiny. I left Germany with a warm side towards the German people, which I have retained through life. Their simplicity, truthfulness, and unaffected naturalness; their thoughtfulness, honesty of research, accuracy of learning, and breadth of generalisation; their kindliness, frankness, and true-heartedness, were just the sort of virtues that had a peculiar attraction for me. I was glad to learn from them. For many years I went about in the world oppressed with nothing so much as a feeling of my own ignorance and stupidity. This feeling made me constantly open and eager to learn; and this eagerness to learn led by slow degrees to the attainment of a certain amount of wisdom.

CHAPTER V.

ROME.

1830–1831.

JOHN BLACKIE was hurried away from Berlin by his impetuous friends, John and Francis Forbes, who arrived on the scene earlier than they were expected, and stayed a much shorter time than was quite convenient. Excellent fellows as they were, their patriotism was of that type which scorns to be greatly interested in foreign sights, and it disposed them to make short work of a tour imposed upon them by the paternal wisdom, but offering no particular attractions to sound Calvinists and practical Aberdonians. Francis scouted as ridiculous John Blackie's assertion that he could stop a week at every place they passed, and being a masterful spirit, he swept the little party forward. Now and then young Blackie rebelled, and insisted on a longer stay where his interest was specially awakened. Their first halt was at Dresden, from which place he wrote to his father. This letter describes the hurry imposed on his final arrangements and leave-takings at Berlin, but speaks with sincere regard of his comrades. He managed to take impressive farewells not only of Miss Minna Doering, but also of

other gracious *Fräulein*, who deigned to accept the little volumes of English poetry which he offered as parting tokens, not without a tear or two on either side—those facile Teutonic tears that come for little, and go as they come.

The farewell visits to the Professors were of sterner stuff, and less evanescent in their results. For Neander gave him a most valuable introduction to Mr Bunsen, Prussian Ambassador at the Papal Court; and Boeckh provided him with a letter to Professor E. Gerhard, an archæologist at Rome of European fame. Another friend opened the doors of the kindly confraternity of painters by making him known to two chiefs of the order.

He packed up all his German books, along with a number of engravings collected for his father, and despatched them in two heavy boxes to Aberdeen. A third box went to Mr Peter Merson at Elgin, full of the rarer works which that gentleman had desired, and which Leipsic and Berlin had proved competent to furnish; and so, having got rid of these weightier matters, he equipped himself for further travel, and started for Dresden on March 25.

The trio stayed some days there for the sake of the picture-galleries, and then proceeded by Prague to Vienna, which they reached in time for the Easter ceremonies, and where they found so much to interest them that they remained twelve days. Mr and Mrs Jackson were at the inn where they put up, and made pleasant return for John Blackie's kindness to their son in Berlin. But a misfortune overtook him here which abated his satisfaction with the tribute of praise now and again granted by the home authorities to his thrift and financial management. He had gone with his friends to a sumptuous Easter ceremonial in the Cathedral of St Stephen, his pocket-book, which contained a letter of credit for a considerable sum of

money, being in the inner pocket of his coat. The crush was tremendous, and the young men had pushed their way through a mixed crowd to get good places. When these were secured, John clapped his hand to his pocket, to find it turned inside out, and, of course, empty. Of ready money there was not more than fifty shillings lost; but at first he was inconsolable, as the letter of credit was for a sum sufficient not only to carry him to Rome, but to pay his expenses there for two months at least. The sacristan and he searched the church in vain, the police were applied to without success; but finally, on going to report his loss to the bank, he was comforted with the information that no one could make use of his letter of credit, as both the bank in question and all the other houses interested had his signature. He was half afraid, however, that his father might be sufficiently annoyed with his carelessness to recall him to Aberdeen, and he protested sportively that rather than that should happen he would enlist in the Italian army, or become a monk in a Roman monastery—two professions for which he felt himself to be eminently qualified.

The banker supplied him at once with money, so that, except for the temporary anxiety and for the shock to his self-esteem, which he so frankly admits, the incident proved harmless, and his father was too sensible a man to treat it otherwise than lightly.

From Vienna the little party travelled slowly through Styria and Carinthia to Trieste, at the rate of about fifty miles a-day, spending the nights at the ordinary stages. When they came to Laybach they stayed two nights, so as to spend the intervening day in visiting the grotto of Adelsberg, with whose mighty halls and tunnels they were much impressed. Leaving Carniola, they took about three days to cover the road to Trieste. Here they rested a time, and then proceeded, always with the help of a *vetturino*, to

Venice, where they made a week's halt. Francis Forbes distinguished himself as general manager and contractor, reducing extortionate *vetturini* to reason and paying them just one-half of what they demanded. From Venice they made their way by Ancona and Bologna to Rome without hindrance or mishap, heartily tired of the long jogging days, and as yet not at all enthusiastic about Italy and its sunny plains. Fatigue and hurry seem to have spoilt the last few days of travel, and John Blackie was very glad when they came to an end, and he was quietly housed in two comfortable rooms in the Via Due Macelli, close to the Piazza di Spagna. He was glad, too, to resume his own independence of action, for he had been constrained to adapt himself to the somewhat imperious direction of his companions during nearly two months, and as he was no longer either ignorant of his own will or incompetent to use it, the strain had required all his philosophy and that control of his temper which is always difficult to a young and eager spirit conscious of varied needs and interests and curbed by circumstances. It marks the discipline to which he had already attained, that his complaint of these circumstances is always gentle, and even tempered by admiration. But the relief is evident in the bright letter in which he signals to his father his settlement as a free and independent lodger in the Via Due Macelli.

He dined every day at a *trattoria* in the Piazza di Spagna, at that time much frequented by artists, and took his afternoon cup of coffee in the well-known Caffée Greco. He delivered his letters of introduction to Severn and Gibson, and through them became admitted to a fellowship with the artists in Rome which was both socially delightful and roused in him the dormant faculty of seeing. He began almost at once to take lessons in drawing, and so equipped his vision for daily discoveries.

His letters from Rome begin at quite an early date to be illustrated by neat little pen-and-ink sketches of the columns and statues which he described, and although he did not pursue this accomplishment after leaving Italy, it is certain that from this time he began to look at the world of nature and that of art more fully instructed what to seek in either. It is notable that he was not at this time greatly impressed with the beauties of nature. He says himself that "his delights were with the sons of men," that the veriest rag of humanity was more interesting to him than the finest landscape, and that he regarded the latter as but a fitting scene for the action of the former. Homer, Shakespeare, and Browning were of the same mind as to the relative importance of man and nature, but all three mighty poets knew Nature well, and could in a brief flash of words illumine her features and her moods. John Blackie learned in later life to love her better, and, as we shall find, to seek the companionship of her mountains and moors, and to accept their message.

It is not wonderful that he should at once have begun to investigate the Roman Catholic religion as demonstrated in its acts of worship and ethical results in Rome. At first the piety of the Italian people attracted him—the little services reverentially offered at street corners and at humble shrines, the "Ave Maria" of the vesper hour, the tender devoutness of kneeling peasants in the open basilicas; and so much did this side of the worship appeal to him that for two days he was seriously disturbed by doubts whether, after all, the right form of Christian worship were not to be found in the Roman Church. It was natural that, diverted as he had been from Calvinistic theology, his open mind should be ready to receive impressions from these incidents in the drama of the Church. Ever and again the faithful devotion of the poor, their eyes filled with

wistful veneration of some past mystery which it were sacrilege to probe, attracts sensitive hearts to their worship; but the mind taught to put aside a material pageantry, and to commune with the Divine, soon rejects the fleeting influence. John Blackie was not yet fully schooled, but he was honestly seeking "a religion to live by," and it became apparent to him that Roman Catholicism bore few of the desirable fruits of righteousness. That there were saints in that Church as well as in others he discovered, but they were so by special grace. The tyranny over heart and intellect, the low level of energy and aspiration to which the system condemned its subjects, the childish attitude encouraged by shows and superstitions, the canker of immorality in high places, the greed and luxury of clerical princes and prelates, revolted him, and as these things grew confirmed to his observation, he vented his indignation in a torrent of eloquence to his mother, who must have been reassured by the outburst as to any evil forebodings caused by his first sentimental interest in the Church. This letter contains scarcely a sentence of practical information. He wrote it at a white heat of invective, and forgot to curb himself by the epistolary rules imposed upon him. It was, therefore, notwithstanding its staunch Protestantism, rather a failure in the home circle, anxious for descriptions and personal details, and he was reproved accordingly. He bore the discipline well, and admitted his failings as a correspondent with cheery humour.

He was acquiring Italian rapidly, his knowledge of Latin bridging the difficulties. He made few acquaintances amongst Italians, however, although their kindliness attracted him; but he was at this time so prepossessed with his debt to the German type of mind and character, that he was not yet capable of acknowledging their claims

to sympathetic study. He commented on this afterwards:—

The Italians made decidedly no impression upon me, not because they had not much that was worthy of my love, but because my heart was already preoccupied by the Germans. The world with which I was specially occupied was the world of thoughts within my own soul, which I was anxious to humanise and to unify, and in this task I had to struggle into clearness by the help of the Bible and of the Germans. To any questions that I had to put, the Italian oracles were altogether dumb. I made no intimate acquaintance among that people. I was possessed by a feeling that a vast gulf divided them and me, which it was impossible to overbridge. The Germans had laid hold of me firmly in Göttingen and Berlin, and they kept that hold in Rome. There was a great narrowness about this, no doubt, but young men are naturally narrow, especially those in whom the subjective element is preponderant.

But his visits to the great collections of Rome and to the ruins of its ancient glory inspired him with the desire to stay during the coming winter, and to devote himself to classical study in their neighbourhood. He wrote to his father requesting his permission to do this, and offering to give up Paris altogether, as of secondary importance to his aim. He described the openings which Rome offered for further study of Latin and Greek literature, for more intimate acquaintance with Grecian and Roman art, and for such a detailed study of Roman history as would fit him very thoroughly for the position to which he now aspired —that of Professor of Humanity in some Scottish University. He admitted that, although this favour might be granted him, his ability to profit by it might not equal his ambition, but he promised that his industry should at all events aim at the latter. He urged his father to send him a speedy answer, as his desire to remain had fevered him with anxiety, and he proposed to divert his thoughts by going to Naples in the interval which must elapse before the answer could reach Rome. It is interesting to find this

letter prefaced by some verses freely translated, or rather paraphrased, from Horace, his father's favourite poet; and although this was probably not the first instance of a tendency to weave his more urgent emotions into rhyme, which became a constant characteristic of his later life, it is the earliest example given in his correspondence. He pressed his suit in these verses, which contrast all other cities with Rome, and end—

> "For though in Rome I should for ages pore,
> Not even then were all my studies o'er."

He suggested, too, that should he never sit on the academic stool, at least he would be a most learned divine.

The wife and daughters of his acquaintance, the German pastor, were about to visit Naples, and he decided to share their carriage and have the pleasure of their company. But fate had prepared for him an absurd trick, which turned the journey into an adventure. A certain Captain Blacker had made himself obnoxious in the kingdom of Naples, and instructions lay at the consulates to prevent his crossing the frontier. John Blackie was summoned to the Farnesina, where resided the Neapolitan consul, and he was there informed that his passport was not satisfactory, as it certified only a "Monsieur Blackie," and gave no information with regard to his profession. He applied to Mr Bunsen, who guaranteed his innocence of the inconvenient behaviour of the objectionable captain, and the consul was good enough to admit that he looked both young and harmless.

He started with the ladies about the end of June, passing through Papal territory until they reached Terracina, the frontier stage. Here they underwent the delay and vexatious inspection incident to those times, but his passport proved equal to the occasion. When they reached

Mola di Gaeta, where they halted for the night, their passports were again delivered up to the authorities. At supper the travellers were disturbed by the arrival of the police. It was politely intimated to John Blackie that his name was suspicious, and that further inquiries must be made, pending which he was requested to consider himself detained. In vain he explained himself; the police inspector agreed that his appearance was not that of a *carbonaro* English captain, but with all courtesy maintained his position that black crosses marked the name of Blackie in their register. The ladies appealed to the obdurate official, and did their best to beguile him from his untoward sense of duty, but in vain, and their cavalier, stamping up and down the room and exploding in mingled wrath and mirth, found himself a prisoner on parole. His passport was sent to Rome for identification, and three days passed before it was returned. The ladies stayed with him during the first day of his captivity, and the whole party wandered about Gaeta and through the grounds of Cicero's villa of Formiæ, where the great Orator of Rome collected his library of valuable manuscripts, where Clodius wreaked his miserable vengeance, and where, when it was rebuilt and readorned on his return from exile, Cicero sought refuge from the bravos of Antony, perishing at their hands in his feeble efforts to escape. This exploration was of great interest to the "prisoner of Gaeta," for Cicero was still his favourite author, and he could furnish his companions with all the details of that tragic day. But the ladies were not able to prolong their stay, and so mounted their *vettura*, and drove away on the second morning. He spent the two intervening days as best he could, and rejoiced greatly when the evening of the second brought not only his permit to proceed, but two gentlemen on their way to Naples, whom, by good fortune, he had met in Rome, and who, being Ger-

mans, and of friendly disposition, made the closing hours of his captivity cheerful, and gave him a seat in their carriage to Naples next day.

These friends became his constant companions in Naples, and together they visited both the art collections of the city and the memorable districts in its neighbourhood. A few lines of his own contemporary description will best indicate the ground which he covered during a stay of five weeks. The wholesome enthusiasm of youth tends towards grandiloquence. He wrote on August 8:—

I have visited all the marvellous regions celebrated in the 6th book of Virgil and the 10th book of the 'Odyssey'; I have stood on the promontory of Cumæ, where the Trojan hero consulted the god of oracles through the medium of the Sibylla; I have seen the still and deep waters of the infernal Lake of Avernus; I have stood on the ruins of the magnificent palaces of the ancient masters of the world in Baiæ and Pozzuoli; I have traversed the silent streets of Pompeii, and with torch-light disturbed the subterranean stillness of Herculaneum; I have seen the barren streams of lava which mark the destructive course of Vesuvian fire, and I have heard the boiling of its caldron; I have visited Capri, wild and romantic abode of the most diabolic of all Roman emperors, Tiberius; I have seen the now uncovered ruins of his lofty palace, and I have trod on the mosaic staircase once trod by the tyrannic feet of this monster and his prætorian guard; I have visited the volcanic island of Ischia, which, though at present not tormented by eruptions, is yet shaken to its centre by earthquakes: all this I have seen, and let me add besides, —the old temples of Pæstum, which, having withstood for ages the attacks of time, of Goths and Saracens, stand now fast and immovable in almost their ancient splendour, as if to mock the more splendid yet less solid edifices of the moderns.

Amongst his excursions from Naples must not be omitted a visit of some days to Sorrento, where the German ladies from whom he parted at Gaeta were staying, and it was in their agreeable company that he visited Capri and wandered on its heights.

He busied himself during the final week in collecting

minerals, engravings, casts, and coins for his father and mother, and he alluded in his letters to the anxiety with which he looked forward to the news from home which would decide his fate for the winter.

He returned to Rome about the middle of August, to find a kindly letter from his father cordially granting his petition. It filled him with a grateful impulse to set about immediately the more intimate study of the classics which he proposed. Mr Bunsen introduced him to some of the Roman libraries, where he found old and rare editions of the Latin authors; but he was at first even more indebted to the hospitality of an English resident in Rome, Mr Finch, a friend of the Prussian ambassador's and a man of unusual culture. This gentleman had collected a large and very valuable library, and as it contained every critical work in English, French, and German, as well as in Italian, and was, besides, well stored with classical books, John Blackie rejoiced to have the privilege of using its treasures. He borrowed at once both Horace and Virgil, and as Rome was deserted in the heat and stillness of summer, he went to Tivoli, and found in the Sibyl Inn both quarters and two German artists with whom he made terms of good-fellowship.

Here he began to read his Horace, with excursions to every spot in that region commemorated by the poet, while the artists shared his rovings for their art's sake, and were not unwilling to listen to his readings and declamations. For the youth was as the child had been, and Horace was voiced to the Sabine winds. The excursions included, of course, Hadrian's Villa, which impressed him sufficiently to call forth a lengthy description. After a fortnight at Tivoli, he commenced a walking tour through the Sabine district, staying at Olevano and Subiaco, and making them points of departure for prolonged expeditions to the higher

ridges of the Apennines. Horace and Virgil in his pocket, provisioned with a piece of bread and cheese, and picking up refreshing draughts of wine at the *osterie* by the way, swinging a stout walking-stick for support and defence, he would start at sunrise and walk till sunset, resting during the hotter hours for dinner and siesta. In this way he thoroughly explored the country and identified every spot which his poets had commemorated. Sometimes he managed a walk of twenty-four miles in a day, and his excellent health bore witness to his wisdom.

He was delighted with Subiaco, where, as well as at Olevano, he found a bevy of busy artists, and where the hospitalities of the inn and their marvellous cheapness encouraged him not only to prolong his stay, but to return again and again as to a centre. In this fashion he made his way to many points of its radius, and amongst them to Alatri and the plains south of the Volscian mountains. It is worthy of note that he never alludes in his letters to the medieval associations of these places. Benedict and his brier-bush do not seem to have existed for him. His talk is all of Roman and Etruscan, of battles on the heated plains which gods and goddesses alighted to witness from an amphitheatre of peaks. The mighty myths of Virgil were written on all the land, and the pale palimpsest of medieval miracle availed nothing to expunge their sterner characters.

He made acquaintance with an English artist at the inn, and they fell into the habit of taking these long walks together. One of their joint expeditions was to Fucino and its fragmentary lake, and they struck the ancient Via Valeria, which leaves the highroad between Subiaco and Tivoli, on their way. As John Blackie had no passport for this excursion into Neapolitan territory, the magistrates of Subiaco signed a paper declaring him to be a fit and

proper traveller. But the police at Celano made much disturbance over the informal document, and he was again in danger of detention. As his object was to visit the antiquities without going farther, they were finally induced to overlook the irregularity, and he returned to Subiaco without scathe to his liberty.

He stayed as long as his funds would permit, for he travelled with little money about him; but so trifling were his expenses—less than two shillings a-day—that it was October before he returned to Rome. Here sad news awaited him. His friend Mr Finch was dead, and a learned German acquaintance, who like himself was pursuing his classical studies in Rome, and whom an academical appointment awaited, had also succumbed to a sudden fever. For a time John Blackie fell into the utmost depression of spirits. He was no match for the grim warrior death, who, not contented with the slain, leaves many sore stricken on the field of his victory. Doubts crowded on his mind, and he brooded himself into a melancholy.

Mr Roods, his artist friend, came to the rescue, and carried him off in the lovely autumn weather to the Volscian hills, where they visited Velletri, Cori, Norba, Ninfa, and Segni, always on foot, walking from twenty to twenty-five miles a-day, and resting at the white towns, which glitter like "grains of salt" amongst the sunny heights. Here, as Mr Roods sketched temples, convents, and *contadini*, John Blackie aspired to do likewise, and had what he called "a fit of the drawing madness." He got on fairly well, and his friend taught and encouraged him. From the hills they descended to the Pontine Marshes, and walked across to Civita Lavinia, Virgil in hand. Then the short walk to Nemi brought them to its mysterious lake, and skirting its shores, they made their way to Palazzuola, to the site of Alba Longa, and so round the

Alban Lake to Marino, avoiding the main route through Albano. They returned to Rome by the end of the third week in October, with health, spirits, and energy completely restored.

He alluded to the "drawing madness" in a letter to his sister Christina, which indicates also that he had given up his rooms in the Via Due Macelli, and had established himself in the Via di Ripetta. The huge folio sheet was mainly filled by a lengthy metrical effusion entitled "The Monk's Sermon and the Devil's Annotations," and announced to be a satire on Catholicism; but it is to be feared that his verses were not so much appreciated at home as his narrations, and his sister expressed herself severely as to the undue preponderance of the former. But he apologised as follows:—

> You see I am verse-mad. But you know I am subject to various kinds of madness, and of frequent recurrence. In Aberdeen I got religious-mad; then I got Latin-mad; now I am verse-mad and drawing-mad, and am getting fast antiquity-mad. Out of this never-ending fermentation may something good arise, that I may not be eternally driven about by every wind of doctrine. But, as it is, I have no more command over my whims and fancies than a hen-pecked husband has over his wife.

His study of the antiquities of Rome now began in good earnest, and included a thorough research into the literature of architecture Mr Finch's death had closed all access to his valuable library, but the German artists, whose society he frequented, introduced him to their library, in which he found copious works on art, antiquities, and architecture. Professor Gerhard, to whom he was introduced by Boeckh's letter, received him with great kindness, and on learning the bent of his studies, gave him much assistance by suggestions which regulated the order of his reading, as well as by books and papers on special archæological subjects.

His letters during November and December contain abstracts of these studies, and one of them gives an excellent account in brief of the Roman Forum, then known as the Campo Vaccino. They are illustrated by drawings of columns, capitals, and architraves, and must have satisfied the inquiring minds of the Blackie household better than the rhymes of former effusions. In a letter to Aunt Menie he thus describes his days in Rome:—

I rise about seven, and after reading a chapter of the Bible and composing a prayer out of it, I go and make my breakfast, which consists simply of a cup of coffee and bread. Till mid-day I read in the Minerva Library. Then I come home, and after lunching, study and draw. After drawing till about three o'clock in the afternoon, I go every second day to my drawing-master, with whom I remain an hour and a half, then stroll about till five, when I go to the *restaurateur* and meet my friends and dine. After dinner I either read at home or go to the German pastor's, where there is German society, and where we have rational discourse on all subjects, religious and worldly. These parties generally end with a chapter of the Bible and a prayer. On Sundays I go to the German church, take a walk, read Klopstock and the Bible, and in the evening visit the Prussian Ambassador, who on these evenings has most beautiful sacred music. I have also a general invitation to his week-day evening parties, as well as to those given by the Duchess of Torlonia, where I see all the beauties of Rome, a sight worth all the musty antiquarian and Latin books that were ever written.

One of these letters hints at a possible book on Roman antiquities, to be published when he returned to Aberdeen; but as his knowledge increased, the vastness of the subject disheartened him.

His steady church-going and Bible-reading testify to the constant flame of devotional feeling in his nature, because at this time his mind was quite unsettled concerning doctrinal religion. He was shedding the hard husk of Calvinism, and was unwilling to accept the effusive self-exaltation of the early Evangelicals, being too young yet to be wisely

tolerant and to see beyond the workers to the work. Their ignorance of the Holy Scriptures in any but the obvious sense, and their refusal to study them with any candid system of interpretation,—what he termed their "canting and ranting harangues," distinguished too often by prejudice and not by wisdom,—estranged him from their party, although amongst them he acknowledged men of sincere personal religion, anxious only for the best interests of mankind. From time to time, unable to feel himself at one with any professed religious party, he fell into fits of deep dejection. Visions of death, judgment, and eternal perdition filled and paralysed his mind. Mr Bunsen, a man whose diplomatic ability owed its exceptional influence to his rare and Christian character, came now and again to his rescue, and the German pastor availed him too in times of need. On one occasion Bunsen took him to his own study and questioned him about his religious convictions, urging him with such tender earnestness that John Blackie burst into tears. Another time, when in a scoffing strain he alluded to the doctrine of eternal damnation, Bunsen called him sharply to order, reminding him "that the duration of other men's damnation was no business of his, that he would find enough to do attending to his own personal religion, and that damnation of some kind or other was sure to follow on all unrepented sin." The older man, matured and ennobled by Christianity, was displeased to find this clever youth, in whom he took an interest, wasting his energy in "boggling among dark theological questions of no practical value."

It was during an access of depression that he visited one morning the Hanoverian Ambassador, Mr Kestner,—interesting to us as the son of Werther's Charlotte,—to whom he had been introduced by Mr Bunsen. Mr Kestner amused his leisure by drawing portraits of his friends, and

on this particular morning he was busy with a study of John Blackie's head. Watching his sitter, he divined his state, and questioned him with gentle persistence. John Blackie confessed his despair at his own protracted immaturity. "Believe me," said Kestner, "your slow growth predicts a rich ripening: the larger nature needs long development."

So wise a sympathy served to dispel the present cloud, and to ward off its approach at many an after-time.

His Christmas Eve was spent with the Bunsens, and he speaks of the kindness which they showed him on this occasion, Mrs Bunsen having provided a rare and beautiful engraving for his Christmas gift. He began the new year with a thorough investigation into his gains from that just completed, and this investigation seems to have made him realise more than ever his great indebtedness to his father, and the duty, growing ever plainer, of putting a period to that indebtedness by fitting himself as soon as possible for remunerative work. This meant more and more a professorial chair, and we find him redoubling his efforts to become qualified for so honourable a post.

His friend Professor Gerhard suggested that a minute study of some antique bas-relief or inscription, which had not yet been made the subject of an archæological paper, might not only concentrate his labours, but might give scope for an essay in Latin or Italian likely to promote his ends. The advice was good, and he changed the field of his researches from the Forum to the Vatican, whose marvellous collection gave him a larger choice. Here he made lists of likely subjects, drawing them up to the extent of his artistic attainments,—which had taught him the important lesson of overlooking no detail,—and studying them at home. Books in Latin, Greek, French, Ger-

man, and Italian were needed for this work, and these he procured either from Professor Gerhard or by making copious extracts in the Minerva Library. When Mr Gerhard's books and manuscripts were too valuable to be lent, he had the privilege of frequenting his rooms and copying the informing passages at his very study-table. His gifts and assiduity pleased the Professor, whose own industry was immense, and who hoped to make a useful archæologist of his young friend.

The part which Greek necessarily took in such a quest awoke his dormant interest in that language, and that interest shortly resolved itself into fuller study. He had made the acquaintance in Rome of a young Greek student, and at once engaged him to give him two lessons weekly in modern Greek With quick observation he noted that the language of Homer had suffered but little change, and that while three thousand years have seen the rise of many a modern tongue, while Latin has given birth to a whole sisterhood of varying dialects, while tongues have lived and died or linger obscurely in the *patois* of insignificant valleys, Greek is still spoken in the streets of Athens and in the villages of the Peloponnesus changed in but few inflections from the language of Pericles and Agesilaus. From this time dates his enthusiasm for Greek. The rapidity with which he acquired its modern form astonished his teacher, with whom he always talked in Greek. Homer, Æschylus, and Sophocles became instinct with life, and were soon companions as constant as Virgil and Horace.

Busy as he was with increase of his store, he seems to have felt much timidity about his own power to make use of it. In a letter to his father dated January 20, 1831, he says:—

I have always been haunted with a want of confidence. I always

fear that what I could say or write on a subject would not be worth the hearing or reading. But too much of such a fear is childish, and I must pull up all my courage to shake it off.

In these lines we have evidence not only of healthy modesty, but of that sanity of practical judgment upon which all worthy living depends.

The death of the Pope and the accession of Gregory XVI. took place about this time, and he wrote with interest in the uprising of many nations against tyranny, and rejoiced that even in Italy, Bologna, Ancona, and Ravenna were giving the newly invested Pontiff and his College of Cardinals some flutter of uneasiness. Indeed, as the days passed, the news that a rebel army was on the march for Rome, and that the Pope had gone to Civita Castellana, where he was mustering the Papal forces, gave all foreign residents a hint to pack up and be ready to leave at a moment's notice; but Mr Bunsen advised John Blackie to stay quietly where he was until the situation at Rome took a definite form. He greatly preferred to stay, and, as events proved, the capital and its immediate States were not yet prepared to throw off the sacerdotal yoke, and the rising in the north was crushed.

John Blackie's lessons in modern Greek helped him to a view of the pronunciation and accentuation of the ancient language, which grew to a conviction as he advanced in its lore. He says in a letter to his father dated January 28:—

I have a project in my head to set on foot a controversy about the Greek pronunciation, as I think it quite plain that our professors are wrong in not adopting the pronunciation of modern Greek. This is not a dead but a living language.

Thus early did he form an opinion on this point, maintained throughout his public career, and advocated again and again both in newspaper controversy and in

academic conclave. Sometimes the longing to extend his travels to Greece breaks out in these letters. His generous father met that longing with a cordial approval, and proposed that he should now leave Rome and spend the spring in making a tour on the mainland and amongst the islands of Greece. The prospect was most alluring; but John Blackie had begun to see how good a thing it is that a man should stand on his own feet,—and every lesson attained in the conduct of life, once become an organic part of his ethical philosophy, grew living and urgent. He declined the offer with dutiful gratitude, on the ground that to go to Greece now would be to sacrifice the completion of his gain in Rome; that, infinite as the pleasure of such a tour would be, it must necessarily be only pleasure; and that to acquire independence on his return to Aberdeen, it was best for him to remain at his post, studying with all the severity which his archæological undertaking had imposed upon him. The subject of that undertaking was now selected. It was a bas-relief representing a battle between the Romans and the Germans, and to be seen on a sarcophagus in the Vatican Museum.

It plunged him into the specific study of Greek and Roman armour. To this end he had to search through poets, historians, antiquaries, and lexicographers, had to note and compare the weapons represented on the statues, bas-reliefs, pictures, and Etruscan vases to which he had access, and finally to identify each with its description in prose or poetry. Professor Gerhard refused to accept any but the most thorough work, and his disciple rejoiced to be forced to model his powers on the learning and industry of the great German archæologist.

A French *savant* had already made this bas-relief the subject of an essay, but had proposed some theory of

its *motif* untenable on full investigation. John Blackie set himself to controvert this writer, but the first draft of his argument was couched in Latin so gusty and highflown that Professor Gerhard declined it, and imposed upon him a quiet and fully detailed statement of his views in unvarnished Italian.

These labours occupied the spring. Early in May his father became anxious for his return. This roused him to a sense of how deeply his interest was now involved in archæological pursuits, and as Professor Gerhard proposed to take him for a few days' tour in Etruria, he determined to make an appeal for further leave of absence. He sought Bunsen's aid, and that gentleman wrote to Mr Blackie a letter which is worthy of quotation, not only for the estimate which it expresses of John Blackie, but for the very fact's sake that it is a letter by Chevalier Bunsen :—

ROME, 3d *May* 1831.

SIR,—I hope you will not find it too great a liberty if I presume to address to you these few lines. Although unknown to you except by the favourable report of my excellent young friend, your son, I have in the first place to thank you for the very kind message you have sent me through him. I assure you that I shall have very great pleasure in coming to Scotland to make your personal acquaintance, and to tell you by word of mouth how glad I have been to have known your son at Rome, whose acquirements, whose pure zeal for the cultivation of his mind, and whose excellent qualities of heart have endeared him to me and my friends in Germany and at Rome to a very high degree.

It is in consequence of his request that I take the liberty of observing to you of what importance it will be to him to be able to finish a literary research he has begun at this place. He scarcely can work it anywhere else but here, on account of the monuments he must observe and describe, and it would certainly be very much to be regretted if he was to give it up entirely, after having bestowed upon it many months of study and research. I feel assured that two months will be sufficient to terminate it; and as he is in the enjoyment of the best health, and always active and busy, I really

believe you will for this delay not think him guilty of a breach of promise. He has always expressed to me the highest sense of his filial duties, and I am sure he would willingly sacrifice not only every wish, but every laudable scientific pursuit, to a paternal command. But as this positive command does not exist, I request you, sir, not to withhold from him your sanction of such a prolonged stay of two months, which I can give you the most positive assurance will be of most essential use and importance to him. The work which thus he will be able to finish on the spot will do him honour in the literary world of Scotland and of Germany. Forgive, sir, the liberty I am taking, and believe me to be your humble and obliged servant,

J. BUNSEN.

When this letter was despatched, John Blackie set out with Professor Gerhard to visit the Etruscan tombs in the neighbourhood of Corneto. Here they went carefully over the sepulchres of the ancient people of Tarquinii and Vulci, which the proprietors, Prince Lucien Buonaparte and two Italian princes, had swept clean of every movable. He wrote a learned and interesting letter on the subject, touching on the controversy, which at that time raged amongst antiquaries, as to the Greek origin of Etruscan or the Etruscan origin of Greek ornament. This letter was published in the 'Edinburgh Literary Journal,' whose editorship had changed hands, the first editor, Mr Henry Glassford Bell, having resigned his charge. Mr Jonathan Bell was in Rome, to his old friend's great satisfaction. He recorded their frequent meetings, and as frequent theological frays, both following the perfervid inborn impulse to battle over doctrines.

During the summer months of June and July, John Blackie was still in Rome revising and correcting, and at length satisfactorily completing, his paper. It passed muster by the end of July, and on August 2 he went out to Frascati to stay with Chevalier and Madame Bunsen at their villa there. One incident of this visit was related in after-years by his host.

One morning when breakfast was on the table and his young guest missing, Mr Bunsen sought him far and near in the grounds of the villa. Guided by tones which rose and swelled and sank with stimulating emphasis, he made his way to a field where grew in serried ranks cabbages, pumpkins, and warlike *granturci*, and here, addressing the regiments of vegetables in sounding Greek and after the manner of Demosthenes, he found his friend. Perhaps the neighbourhood of Tusculum had filled him with emulation, for just in this manner, we are told, did Cicero perfect his Greek. Though new to Bunsen, the trait was one with which we are already familiar.

About this time he announced his intention so to devote himself to Greek as to become qualified for the Chair of Greek in some University. In the letter which contains this expression of purpose he abjures all thought of the Presbyterian ministry. Mr Jonathan Bell had given it as his opinion that he was neither an archæologist nor a theologian, but emphatically a linguist, and he endorsed his friend's estimate, though he hinted roguishly that there might be the makings of a tragic dramatist amongst his volcanic powers, as there was a constant stream of versification from within overflowing his control. Indeed his letters were written half in rhyme, and roused wrath at home.

He described his visit to Bunsen as delightful. He stayed till the middle of August, and learned many things from his host, amongst others to listen as well as to talk, an exercise which he felt at first to be penitential. Mr Bunsen had conversations with him about personal religion, and told him that he had too readily accepted the conclusions of German scepticism, and that a thorough study of the human mind might bring home to him the shallowness of all systems which excluded the spiritual

and the supernatural. Such lessons were humbling, but he realised that from the lips and example of such a man as his host they were a powerful corrective of the crude mental audacity which these years of freedom had engendered.

He read his essay to Mr Bunsen, who agreed with Professor Gerhard that it was a learned, accurate, and finished production, expressed too in admirable Italian. It was given to the printers at once, and was included in the papers of the 'Annali dell' Instituto di Corrispondenza Archæologica per l'Anno 1831.' It won from all experts the utmost praise both for its learning and for its Italian.

This result being secured, he despatched a box of books, prints, coins, and minerals to Aberdeen, sent on his own luggage to Munich, and prepared to leave Rome on September 2. He did so with a heavy heart, regretting most of all to bid farewell to Mr Bunsen, but grieved also to part from many friends, who had made the Eternal City like a second home.

CHAPTER VI.

END OF *WANDERJAHRE.*

1831–1832.

JOHN BLACKIE and a young German called Thilemas started on September 2, knapsacks on back, dressed in white Italian summer suits, which could be washed when occasion offered, and without a care in the world other than heavy hearts at leaving Rome. Some of this heaviness can be traced to a romantic sentiment which had grown upon our hero for a certain clever and amiable Clotilda, to whom he had given lessons in English during the spring and summer, and whom he celebrated in abounding verse as the pattern of female dignity and charm. He had presented his verses on the subject to his family, however, and not to the lady herself, so that but for the sorrow that he must leave his gentle friend with little hope of seeing her again, he was free from fetters.

The two pedestrians made their way by Perugia and Chiusi to Florence, taking nine days to walk the two hundred and fifty miles, at the rate of from twenty-five to thirty miles a-day. They stopped at the wayside inns for food and rest, and made the towns their stages for the

night. The peasants whom they met could not understand the portent of two persons who scoured the country on foot, and sometimes they were refused admittance on the ground that only brigands and escaped malefactors pursued such courses. But they had much enjoyment of the tramp, and turned aside to view the antiquities which bordered their route. On September 11 they reached Florence, and made a halt of ten days to visit its galleries and buildings. The Tuscan country pleased them much, and they picked up what information they could about its well-cultivated valleys.

John Blackie wrote to his father from Florence in a tone of the most pronounced Radicalism, handling both the land question and the Irish question with vigour. He described the condition of the peasant farmers of Tuscany, who, paying a rent of three pauls an acre, were stimulated to industry by the certainty of becoming rich; and he contrasted their advantages with the state of heavily rented farmers in Scotland, who have not merely to find the rent in the soil, but to do so in a climate so uncertain and often so destructive of their outlay.

From Florence they walked by Bologna to Venice, with which John Blackie renewed his acquaintance Their whole march from Rome had not cost them more than two shillings a-day, which he records with some pride; but in Venice they met a Bosnian in charge of a return coach to Munich, who, being willing to pocket some trifle by securing passengers for the journey, offered to take them the whole way, with bed and board at the stages, for twelve florins each. As the journey lasted six days, they gladly accepted his terms, and travelled through the Tyrol and by Innsprück to their destination in comfort.

The two friends parted company at Munich, as Mr Thilemas lived there; but after a few days spent in visit-

ing the pictures and antiquities, John Blackie made the acquaintance of a German student bound for the University of Bonn, and willing to make the way with him on foot through Augsburg, Wurtzburg, and Frankfort.

Mr Bunsen had advised him to remain the coming winter at Bonn, if he could get permission from his father to study there, and had furnished him with an introduction to Professor Brandes. But on his arrival he found a letter from Mr Blackie sharply reprimanding him for his dilatory return, and desiring to know on what earliest possible day he would be in London. This letter acted as a reminder that his years of liberty were coming to a close, and that his father would have a right to expect from him a return of evident profit for all the outlay and indulgence which had made them possible. The thought dejected him greatly, and for a time he lost sight of all that he had gained, and dwelt somewhat hopelessly upon the fear that, in spite of every advantage, he had acquired nothing of practical value. This self-distrust makes itself evident in his reply to the letter. He promised to leave Bonn in ten days, explained that what he had lost in time he had gained in pocket by making his journeys on foot, relinquished all new demands on his father's indulgence, attempted to summarise his gains from the two years and a half of absence, but admitted that his very gains might have led him to conclusions which would not only frustrate his father's hopes for him, but would possibly paralyse his own power to deal in any practical way with the circumstances which form the very conditions of independence. Answering a stern comment on his scepticism, he concluded :—

My scepticism is not final. I have cleared the ground, perhaps, from flowers as well as weeds ; it is no matter,—the flowers will grow so much the better afterwards.

His stay at Bonn was thus restricted to a mere visit; but he had the advantage of making the acquaintance of Professor Brandes, an acquaintance which ripened in after-years to friendship.

Mr Blackie took what was then the long journey from Aberdeen to London to meet his son, who arrived in London about the beginning of November, still clad in his white summer clothes. To have him properly clad would be the excellent banker's first care, as it was essential to the due carrying out of the paternal purpose in London. Eager as he was to see his son once more, he would hardly have undertaken the troublesome journey merely to forestall their meeting by a week. He came to introduce him to such of the London notabilities as he knew, and to secure their interest in his further success. These included Joseph Hume; Lord Brougham, who was a cousin of Dr Forsyth, the minister of Belhelvie; John Gibson Lockhart, connected by marriage with the Blackie family; William Jerdan, a Kelso man and lifelong friend of Mr Blackie's, and at this time editor of the 'Literary Gazette'; and last, but greatest, Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

With Lord Brougham they breakfasted, dined with Lockhart and Jerdan, and spent an hour with Coleridge. The great poet and thinker was then old and infirm, his body was bent and his face sad. He told the young enthusiast for German philosophy that he had thrown all such speculation overboard, and found perfect satisfaction for every inquiry in the first chapter of the Gospel of St John.

A week of metropolitan bustle was enough for Mr Blackie, and they turned their faces homeward at its end. It was a memorable home-coming after two years and a half of absence. Mrs Blackie, Aunt Menie, and his sisters were much excited. As the travellers drove up, Helen, ten years old and timid, for whom the brother had grown to be

of mythical proportions, hid herself behind the window-curtains. Even the stolid James was moved by expectancy. His welcome home was all that he could desire; his words and looks and gestures were devoured by admiring eyes; the long hair—badge of his Germanism—was noted without censure; and his bubbling effervescence of fun and laughter evoked happy smiles at the full fireside.

He stayed at home for six months, during which time his father and he had many conversations about his future. With the admirable good sense which distinguished him, Mr Blackie accepted without demur his son's attitude towards the Church, and magnanimity as well as good sense dictated his acceptance; for all the advantages at home and abroad which he had gladly afforded him from the first indication of his theological impulse, were intended to fit him for a distinguished career in the Scottish Church.

And now his son returned on his hands, endowed with new and varied acquirements, it is true, but also with new and varied aims, and the studies which he had pursued to deepen his theological insight and to strengthen his grasp of theological doctrine had only served to bewilder the one and to paralyse the other. The finer polish, too, which was meant to adorn the doctrine of Scottish Calvinism had diverted his unsettled mind into secular directions; and here was this youngster of twenty-two aspiring to lofty academical posts because he must needs be enamoured of the learned and industrious lives and influence of veteran Göttingen professors.

But Mr Blackie made a shrewd reckoning of his son's gains and gifts. True, he was a youngster, and what he had learned in Scotland he had promptly unlearned in Germany: but here he was, as expert in the use of German and Italian as were the native scholars of either land; a fluent Latinist; a student of Greek, successful in the verbal

understanding of the language, and eager for further mastery of its difficulties—with fresh theories, too, to propound upon its accentuation and vocalisation; an archæologist, or at least with the accredited makings of an archæologist about him; well read in the literature of the languages which he had acquired, and with his appreciation of German literature so roused by its masterpieces that one of his liveliest aims was to make them known in Scotland by translation and commentary. Perhaps an overdose of Germanism disturbed the equipoise of these attainments; but Mr Blackie, critical and exacting as he was, could not but admit that his son had made full and varied use of his opportunities, and that when, with maturing, his gifts became practicable, he might occupy for their exercise a larger sphere than the cramped confines of a Moderate pulpit. To find him, too, a pronounced Radical, as the term went in those days, eager for reform in Church and State, in School and University, panting to set all things to rights, from an accent in Greek to a point in the dire dogma of perdition, was as sunshine to the father, in whose Liberal politics John had taken little or no interest before he went abroad. He had returned a politician, hot for reform bills and the emancipation of nations. That, too, was a gain. So was his industry, which never flagged. His honesty was bred in the bone, and akin to his father's.

But all these excellences would neither create nor empty a chair of Humanity or Greek because he had set his heart upon it. Years and his youth must pass before the Areopagus which presides over academical honours could regard him as chastened to the type which it admired, and it was impossible for him to stay at home and attend the "psychological moment." Some profession must be adopted which would keep a fine edge on his wits, would permit him to maintain and increase his acquirements, and would in time

open the way to independence by its own merits, should the door of scholastic preferment remain barred. Mr Blackie considered the matter carefully, and ended by proposing to his son that for three years, dating from the spring of 1832, he should study law in Edinburgh with a view to the Scottish Bar, and should receive during that time an allowance of £100 a-year. As there were many children to be provided for, and as Mr Blackie's income lay within the limits of comfort rather than of luxury, the arrangement was most generous, and John, though little inclined towards the law, was too grateful for his release from the Church to object to it. It was but reasonable that his father should solve a problem which he himself had darkened with a multitude of heterogeneous purposes.

So, this matter settled, he fell to serious study, not of Erskine and Bell, but of German and Greek. In the former he tackled Goethe's 'Faust,' in the latter he made himself conversant with the plays of Euripides. We know already that one of the purposes stimulated by his immersion in German influences was to make the German masterpieces better known in Scotland. At that time little influence had penetrated from the literary revival in Germany to either Edinburgh or Aberdeen. The former had its own nucleus of culture, our great romanticist Walter Scott at the core, and minds were vivid enough and amply furnished with exercise. The stir and movement at home neutralised the inrush from without, and the names of Goethe, Schiller, Fichte, and Lessing were little more than names to Scottish ears. Thomas Carlyle had begun to drive them home into the minds of his countrymen, but to John Stuart Blackie belongs some share of the credit which Carlyle received in fee for putting into home circulation the coinage of that lettered dynasty of Germany. But while he stayed at home, this work was at its elementary stage.

His choice of Euripides for reading in Greek was founded on the simplicity and luminousness of that dramatist's style in comparison with that of his greater predecessor's, whom John Blackie preferred when he grew familiar with both. But at this time he liked to master the story as he read, without the incessant stumbling over obscure passages which wearies the attention, and so he climbed less painfully the ascent which led to further toil. This gradual method he advocated in after-life, both on the ground of personal experience, and because mature Grecians amongst the Germans lent their authority to its support. Many years later he wrote:—

> In the learning of languages fluency ought to be acquired first, then accuracy; the whole must be comprehended and felt with a living power before the details are minutely criticised. We read and love Shakespeare before we concern ourselves with his various readings; and I cannot see why it should be otherwise with books written in Greek or Latin.

As it is the method of nature that the child shall pick up a store of words, and shall excellently arrange them by ear and intuition, before he can construe and analyse his own arrangement, the gradual method of acquiring any language, ancient or modern, is obviously the right one; but pedagogues were then too remote from nature to refresh themselves with her pure wisdom.

Two friends belong particularly to this time, and both were of special assistance to him in his study of Greek, while one of them rendered him a service of far more vital value. Both gentlemen lived at Banchory: one was Dr Adams of Banchory, and the other was the Rev. William Anderson, then Established Church minister of the place. The first was a man so devoted to Greek that he held all modern literature in mean esteem, and accused even Shakespeare of plagiarising from classics which the great dramatist

could not have read. He could repeat long odes of Pindar without a pause, and put a solemnity into these recitations which savoured of the pulpit. Indeed Greek was his religion, for in so far as he had imbibed modern culture at all, it was culture of the school of Voltaire. There is no doubt that he was the finest Greek scholar in Scotland, although his life of retirement, and his hostility to creeds and Churches, withheld from public recognition and usefulness both his attainments and his influence. John Blackie's ardour pleased him, and he had long felt the same contempt for the Greek of Scottish Universities which the younger man had brought red-hot from the Continent, so that the two fell into a sympathetic intimacy, which served to cherish the vigorous saplings of scholastic ambition and educational reform planted by Göttingen and watered at Rome.

It is clear, however, that the Voltairianism which Dr Adams professed was beneficial in rousing to a militant attitude that dormant faith in the spiritual life which had latterly lain low in John Blackie's mind. It had been smothered by the conclusions of critical research, those premature conclusions of an incomplete research; but these had only succeeded in extinguishing dogmas of men, which ranked then, as they rank still, in divers creeds devised by divers Churches, on the same level as the Word which was from the beginning.

In confirming his hold of the latter, the minister of Banchory proved of timely value. Mr Anderson, who belonged rather to the Evangelical than to the Moderate party of the Church of Scotland, was both a scholar and a man of wide culture at a time when general culture was rare in Scotland. He took an interest in philology, and welcomed at first approach the light which Sanscrit threw upon that study, and his talk was full of matters hitherto

outside John Blackie's ken. Eager to learn, the latter was attracted into an intimacy with the minister, whose "fine harmony of intellectual and moral gifts" gave him a wholesome ascendancy, and he proved able to convince his young friend of many a crude conclusion, as well as to recognise his power and promise. It was this quiet candour, at once sympathetic and critical, which gave him influence over the fervid mind accustomed to snubs from the Moderates and Evangelicals. Upon these parties plunged in the blinding fray John Blackie was apt to retort with derisive laughter, for their polemics testified to neither wisdom nor charity. But Mr Anderson took no part in the controversy, and kept his even way, doing his proper work at Banchory, an Evangelical in heart and life, and when the great split of 1843 filled the air with its rancours, leaving the Church for a chair in the College at Agram.

Only one incident, initiating a new departure for John Blackie, occurred during his six months' stay at home. This was the visit of Lord Brougham to Belhelvie and Aberdeen in the spring of 1832. The Blackies met him on several occasions; and at a banquet given by the Aberdonians in his honour, John Blackie was put forward to make one of the after-dinner speeches. The subject allotted to him was the part which Lord Brougham was taking in spreading intelligence among the people. It was his first public speech, but no further record of its matter remains. Of its manner he wrote in the "Notes":—

I recollect only that it was fervid and hasty and violent. The words came rushing through my throat like a number of disorderly persons pushing through the narrow entrance to the pit on a benefit night at the theatre. I was fluent, however, and did not stick. One sentence begat another in a rough, hasty sort of way. No doubt the violent hurry which I displayed was partly from fervour of temperament, but partly also from the embarrassment which I felt at opening my mouth before a large audience of persons much my superior in years and experience.

CHAPTER VII.

YEARS OF STRUGGLE.

1832–1837.

In the spring of 1832 John Blackie established himself in Edinburgh, and began to read for the Scottish Bar. His lodgings were in Lauriston during the first year of his legal studies, but later he removed to more convenient quarters in Dublin Street. His wooing of the legal muse was both distasteful and unsuccessful in the preliminary stages. He found Bell and Erskine the driest and least intelligible of reading. Gifted and brilliant, his head a very beehive of ambitious fancies, theories, and reforms in active competition with sentiment, and all clamorous for articulate expression, he felt stupefied in the presence of the stereotyped and ancient Themis. To persevere at all needed a courage stimulated by intervals of dalliance with the more attractive Muses. But he made manful efforts, and sought admission into a lawyer's office, that he might the better conquer the dull terminology of the law.

The gentleman who helped him through the perplexities of bonds and bills was a Mr Alexander, a Writer to the Signet, well versed in their dreary details. His first valuable lesson was to reduce his pupil to a salutary sense

of his own ignorance. This incident is told in the "Notes":—

I remember shortly after I entered his office he brought me in a bundle of law papers, and ordered me to read them and give a legal opinion on the merits of the case. I did so with great speed, took my view with decision, and on being asked, gave a distinct deliverance that "the law of the case was quite clear—there could not possibly be two opinions on the point." This was exactly the kind of answer that he expected, so, looking me sharply in the face, he said, "Mr Blackie, whenever I hear a young advocate declare that there is no difficulty in the case, I have no difficulty in declaring that he knows nothing about his business."

This plain speaking was most wholesome for the head a little turned by attainments and speculations which were unusual in the Edinburgh of that time, and which gained for him not merely a very marked social success, but also the auguries of experienced seniors that he would achieve a distinguished career. So he set himself to work to copy papers and to learn slowly and painfully the alphabet of legal lore.

His letters home during the three years which belong to this stage speak to his repugnance for the study of law; and one written to Mr Anderson of Banchory in the autumn of 1832 gave that wise friend some reason to fear that his perseverance would give way. Mr Anderson wrote on November 5:—

I sincerely hope the knot is tied, which will never be loosed, unless by what *you* would call an inevitable fate—*I*, Providence—so that it may not be said in your biography (and I doubt not, if you adhere to the pursuit of knowledge and wisdom, you will yet have a biographer), "In 1832 he resolved upon devoting himself to law as a profession, but soon gave up the pursuit." You may yet be the Lord Advocate, and I—grown stiff with age—may be your humble suitor for a Hebrew Professorship in Aberdeen or St Andrews. But without joke, I am glad you have fixed upon what opens to you a career of honourable and useful employment. You will experience, I doubt not, that man fulfils the conditions of a

happy existence only when actively employed in the duties of life. And, my dear sir, supposing you attain every worldly object upon which the powers of humanity are fitted to exercise themselves, still, believe me, there would exist an aching void which only the supernatural, the perfect and the infinite, God and heaven, could fill. Though I scarce expect that you and I should be at one on religious subjects, yet I cannot help expressing my great anxiety that on the creed, scanty as it may be, which you allow, you should lay fast hold. "Keep it, for it is thy life."

In the few letters which remain of this time, John Blackie can scarcely be said to have gratified the passion of his family for details. Even the pleasant social life to which his evenings were devoted is dismissed with mere dates and addresses; but we gather from this meagre record that he dined out nearly every evening, and that amongst his hosts were Sir William Hamilton, Professor Wilson, Mr Blackwood, Mr Wyld, Mr Bell, and other citizens of note. In a letter to his sister Christina he describes in turn a bevy of her special friends in Edinburgh, emphasising their graces and gifts as they appear to him, and his criticisms indicate his decided preference for a calm and stately deportment in women rather than for lively and varied manners. He was still very sensitive to feminine charm, but fluttered from one attractive lady to another, comparing all with his ideal, and even with the half-forgotten Clotilda at Rome, and finding all short of perfection.

We come on the traces of genial suppers with his fellow-students for the Bar, when rousing talk and song sped the hours to midnight, and when all who could, contributed their own humours, declaimed or sung. For one of these occasions he prepared his "Give a Fee," and sang it to the tune of "Buy a Broom," with a great consenus of mind and voice in the ringing chorus. It is too long for full quotation, but the first stanza may be given:—

"O listen, ye bankers and merchants and doctors all;
O listen, ye old wealthy nabobs, to me;
O listen, ye bishops and deans and tithe-proctors all,
And give to a poor starving lawyer a fee.
Give a fee, give a fee, give a fee;
And give to a poor starving lawyer a fee.

Chorus. O my first fee, my first fee, my first fee;
O when wilt thou tinkle so sweet to my ear?
Months I wait, years I wait,
But all in vain I wait;
O my dear first fee, when wilt thou appear?"

But in spite of the acceptance which he enjoyed in Edinburgh at one of its most brilliant social epochs, when its claims to be called the Modern Athens rested far more on its attitude towards art and literature, on the oratory of its platforms and the sparkling talk of its dinner-tables, than on the buildings which imitate remotely the perfect structures of the ancient capital of Greece, he was deeply dissatisfied with his life and its issues. In a letter to his sister written early in 1833 he says:—

I have been lately very much discontented with myself and the superficial halfness of my own attainments. I feel, too, a great disproportion between my ideas of what should be done and what I am doing. I hope this crisis will soon be over. I have made an irrevocable vow to do nothing by halves, and I long with an unquenchable longing to escape from my present state of intellectual minority.

It was a crisis common to all honest men, who, having realities in view and not mere seeming, are discountenanced again and again, when they make up their accounts, to find that fractions and not integers are the stuff of which the sum of their best efforts is composed. The integer is reached at last, but seldom shows itself wholly in the life which ends by fulfilling it. The fractions are for us, the integers go into the keeping of God, who makes the just spirit perfect.

The great effort of the year 1833 was the translation of Goethe's 'Faust.' John Blackie spent much of his leisure in the Advocates' Library, consulting old books on the black art, and making extracts from them for the notes appended to his translation. Sir William Hamilton, Professor Wilson, and the poet "Delta" took helpful interest in the work, and directed his attention to earlier renderings of the great romantic tragedy by Leveson Gower, by Hayward, and by Syme. He revised his own translation, carefully comparing it with these, but retaining the robuster forms into which his mind moulded the scenes meant to be plainly expressed. He was less occupied with finding verbal equivalents for the parts than with offering a fresh and living presentment of the whole. In the Preface he stated the principle on which he translated the poem:—

> The great principle on which the excellence of a poetical translation depends seems to be, that it should not be a mere *transposing*, but a *recasting* of the original. On this principle it has been my first and chief endeavour to make my translation spirited,—to seize, if possible, the very soul and living power of the German, rather than to give a careful and anxious transcription of every individual line or every minute expression.

His researches in the Advocates' Library gave him a store of material concerning the historical basis of 'Faust,' of which he made good use in the introduction, appending to his explanatory remarks a sketch of the plan and the moral of Goethe's masterpiece, and giving his reasons for confining the translation to the First Part. He considered that the Second Part, or sequel, instead of being necessary for the harmonious development of the first, was a disturbing and incongruous afterthought, and infringed upon the unity and deep significance of the drama.

The translation, accompanied by notes and preliminary remarks, was placed in Messrs Blackwood's hands towards

the end of the year, and appeared in print in the February of 1834.

Its success, as a piece of excellent literary work, was marked. It had faults of style, and occasionally failed in accuracy of rendering. Acting upon his principle of recasting the original, he had omitted here and there a phrase; had given some essentially German thought a form suited to home circulation, but inadequate to its character; had failed, perhaps, to find an English equivalent for some sturdy and foreshortened utterance, and had weakened it in elongation. But it must be remembered that English was the language which he had studied least, and that his very mode of thought was German, since to the Germans he owed the development of his power of independent thinking,—a process which, before he went to Göttingen, was a mere confused brooding over the empirical dicta of others.

Criticism he received in plenty from friends, who, enamoured of Byron, revolted against Goethe's calm presentment of the conflict between good and evil in man, and of the paradoxes which it involved, preferring Byron's revolt, not against evil, but against suffering—a revolt to which his impassioned verse lends a lurid splendour blinding and baleful to this day. But these friends were not critical of his work, but jealous of his preference for Faust to Manfred, and all agreed in praising the spirit and impressiveness of his translation. Of its truthfulness few of these friendly critics were in a position to judge, but he received a letter from Thomas Carlyle, who had already given to the world his 'Life of Schiller,' and whose deep knowledge of German literature made the words of appreciation with which he endorsed John Blackie's translation of virtue to seal its worth. This letter is too interesting to omit:—

CRAIGENPUTTOCK, 28*th April* 1834.

MY DEAR SIR,—I must no longer delay to thank you for the welcome present of your 'Faust,' the more welcome from your kind manner of bestowing it. I have been so busy that time for a patient comparison with the original would never yet offer itself; meanwhile, in looking over your book many spirited passages have struck me; and as yet only one error: the vague couplet, *Die Gegenwart von einem braven Knaben;* in which it is much easier to say that you and others are wrong than who or what is right. I advised Hayward to make it in his second edition: "The present time by (in the hands of) a fellow of ability," but that also only satisfies me on the ground that with Goethe himself rhyme would sometimes have its way.

> For rhymes the rudder are of verses,
> With which like ships they steer their courses.

The newspapers, I perceive, acknowledge your merits and endeavours in a hearty style; which is all one can expect of criticism at present. Let us hope your labours in the German vineyard, which has much lack of honest hands, are but beginning yet, and will lead you to richer and richer results.

Of your Preface and prose notes I can speak deliberately and in terms of great commendation. There is a spirit of openness, of free recognition and appropriation, which I love much, which I reckon far more precious than any specialty of talent or acquired skill, inasmuch as that is the root of all talent and all skill. Keep an "open sense," an eye for the "*Offne Geheimniss,*" which so few discern! With this much is possible, without it as good as nothing.

For the rest, that I must dissent from you somewhat both in regard to the First and the Second Part of 'Faust' is but a small matter. We agree in spirit; this itself is an agreement to let each take his own way in details. Could you but have as much tolerance for me in this new heresy, which I, alas! feel growing upon me of late years, that 'Faust' is intrinsically but a small poem, perhaps the smallest of Goethe's main works; recommending itself to the sorrow-struck, sceptical feeling of these times, but for Time at large of very limited value! Such, I profess not without reluctance, is the sentiment that has long breathed in me; moreover, of the two I find considerably more meaning in the *Second Part! Favete linguis.* At the same time I can well enter into your enthusiasm, and again read 'Faust' along with you like a new Apocalypse, for in that way I read it once already. Ten years hence you shall tell me how it is.

We are leaving this boggy Patmos, and getting under way for

London. It will give me true pleasure to hear of you,—to hear that you advance successfully in all kinds of well-doing. There is no young literary man about Edinburgh from whom more is to be expected. When you come southward, you will see us? Do not fai if you would please us.—With the heartiest good wishes and thanks, I remain always, my dear sir, faithfully yours,

THOMAS CARLYLE.

It appears from this letter that John Blackie had already made the acquaintance of Mr and Mrs Carlyle, and we gather from his correspondence with Mr Jonathan Bell that during their stay in Edinburgh in 1833 he had spent more than one evening with them.

This translation of 'Faust' took its place as the best and most truthful rendering of the poem hitherto made public, but later it was superseded by Sir Theodore Martin's version, which John Blackie himself considered better than his own. George Henry Lewes, however, ranked the earlier translation highly, and used it in the passages from 'Faust' which he quoted in his 'Life of Goethe.' He says: "I shall generally follow Blackie's translation. Of the poetical translations it is the best and closest I have seen, and it has valuable notes."

His absorption with Goethe's poem, and with the researches necessary for its elucidation, brought about an inevitable access of fatigue and temporary distaste to the whole subject, and we find that he turned for a time to a poet of very different temper, to regain from him that equilibrium of mind and spirit, maintained on the one hand by a wide and generous outlook upon life, on the other by stern reflection and self-examination. This poet was William Wordsworth, and for some years John Blackie found his pure and introspective teaching of power to aid his own study of the forces which he found within himself, and which it was a main endeavour to marshal in practicable order for active service. The language, too, of the

Lake poet impressed him with its chosen and delicate fitness, and in view of his need of English influences, he sought to learn from it all that it could yield of help. But the difference between the disciple and the teacher was too great, for, coupled with the tendency to introspection which he had in common with Wordsworth, John Blackie had an imperious impulse to know and be known of his fellow-men. He says in the "Notes":—

> As richness and variety of life opened upon me, I found that the great laker, though the first of moral teachers among his own green hills, was narrow and one-sided, and infected strongly with that moral egoism that no persons can escape who live mainly from within, and who can see nothing in nature or art without impressing on it their own engrossing idiosyncrasy. Wordsworth was too much of a preacher for my idea of a wise poet; he sympathised with man rather than with men. He never could get quit of himself and his own philosophical position. For this reason, after a while, I was obliged to discard him, as I had ever found my greatest improvement to arise from a thorough going out of my natural groove, and receiving into my life as much as possible of the lives and characters of others.

During the first half of 1834 he set himself with desperate industry to the study of law. It was the last year of the three for which his father had made provision, and the crisis was rapidly approaching which should set him face to face with that ruthless but most wholesome test of worth, the capacity to earn his daily bread. He was determined, when the probationary years were at an end, to stand the test, but he knew by this time that Law would hardly prove for him a fount of perennial supply. This conviction was no fruit of idleness, for he left nothing undone which could commend him to the notice of his seniors, or could fit and polish his powers.

We find him in this year a member of the Speculative and Juridical Societies, which form the nursing-grounds of Scottish oratory, forensic and political. The free contro-

versy of the Speculative, whose members are chiefly young lawyers in training for their profession, invigorates and concentrates both thought and utterance, and has given to many a public speaker the valuable lessons of reserve and emphasis which made his speeches weighty in later life. About 1834 a group of youthful stalwarts pitted minds and lungs against each other in lively rhetorical contest. They were men destined to fill the highest seats of law and learning in Scotland, and some of them to achieve a wider fame than belonged to Bar and Bench at home.

William Aytoun, John Gordon, Edward Horsman, James Moncreiff, and Archibald Campbell Swinton were the leaders of this group. The two first belonged to the little court of wits and poets over which Christopher North so royally presided. They were soon to become his sons-in-law, and were well inoculated with all his enthusiasms, real and robust as well as purely romantic. They brought into the arena not only the caustic and somewhat reckless humour of their circle, but also its wealth of allusion and play of wit, its grace of impromptu eloquence, that indescribable quality mingled of romance and good sense, which was its *cachet*. Of the two, Gordon was the more finished orator, and his wit was less sarcastic than that of Aytoun, who spoke seldom, but gave evidence when he did so of powers which his diffidence restrained from reaching their proper distinction. These two formed the formidable section of the audience for a new and untried speaker; but there were other men less varied mentally and less original, but careful and clear as speakers, and less inclined, because perhaps less able, to swoop down upon the blunders and inadequacies of their opponents. Such were Moncreiff and Swinton. Moncreiff had considerable weight in the Speculative, having mastered the manner of public speaking so far that his appearances were always successful, and

in later life, when Lord Advocate, speaking with effect and dignity in the House of Commons.

John Blackie felt the difficulty of taking a worthy place amongst these practised debaters; but he had not joined the Society for the mere purpose of gracing its benches, so on the very first night of his membership he rose, in a fever of shyness and impulse, to take part in the proceedings. No survival of the matter discussed remains, and we only know that his contribution was rather a torrent of nervous sentences than a well-weighed speech. But he felt that if he sat dumb on the first night, he would remain dumb for the rest of his membership, and so in duty to himself he spoke. We can well imagine the rapid utterance, the fresh phrasing, the quaint epithets, the laugh and gesture of "German Blackie" as he was called, but we can also imagine the stir which his appearance provoked, and the promise of a new and rousing element to quicken the mettle of established debaters.

There seems to be some reason for believing that his sense of justice at this time took offence at the Edinburgh Whigs, for Jeffrey's notorious review on Wordsworth exposed the party to a ridicule which some of its members heartily deserved. The deep interest with which he was reading the poet led John Blackie to resent the article, which, like the burning of the Ephesian temple, has immortalised its perpetrator. And we learn from his correspondence that Liberal friends reproached him with a temporary relapse. But all that was brilliant in Scotland then was produced by Tories, or was connected with men who professed to be Tories, perhaps less on political than on romantic grounds. The quickest-witted people in Edinburgh, and the most attractive to a young man bent on mental development, made profession of a quasi-mediaeval Toryism, which served them as a treasure-trove of

poetical material. Their attitude was mainly sentimental, but it became heroic when Whigs pretended to bludgeon a poet whom their prose-drugged senses could not discern, and whom the Tory poets hailed with reverence and delight. It was entirely natural that John Blackie should recoil from the Whigs of the 'Edinburgh Review.' But it does credit to one of those Whigs, James Moncreiff, that he should have overlooked the petulance of this recoil, and should have given the new speaker courage by kindly words of praise on the occasion of this first speech.

The Juridical Society was less to his mind. Here the members were, with a few notable exceptions, mere lawyers, whose dry, cool, unimpassioned treatment of subjects exclusively legal fatigued a mind too fervidly human to find any attraction whatever in punctilio and terms of law. Here he learned that of all men there he was the least adapted to the profession of the Bar. Its "terms of process" were hieroglyphics to which he had no key. The other members of the Juridical spoke them glibly, and glibly apprehended them, found them humorous at times, found depths in them and subtilties which graced their speeches and won applause,—a marvel to John Blackie, for whom their habit of mind was impossible, and to whose ears their speeches were very tedium. The one exception, the Saul amongst these legal prophets, was Henry Glassford Bell. Of him Professor Blackie wrote long afterwards:—

> Besides his literary and popular powers, he had a wonderful sagacity, a capacity for law work and for social enjoyment equally large, a natural eye for business in a man of such remarkable imaginative power quite uncommon.

But although he realised with sincere disappointment the antipathy of his mind to the work which had become

his first duty, he wrestled bravely with its difficulties, pored over its text-books, interleaving them for notes, and shouted aloud its abhorred formulas, as in happier days he had shouted the sounding anathemas of Cicero and the patriotic diatribes of Demosthenes. When his books dealt with the broad uses of law and with its larger organisation, he grasped their contents eagerly: but the numberless details, which seem to be excrescences rather than organic parts; the vast and grotesque vocabulary; the labyrinth of vexatious punctilio; the prehistoric deposit which forms the substratum of Scots Law,—these provoked and repulsed him. Nevertheless he worked well enough to pass the various stages guarded by examination, and to be admitted as a member of the Faculty of Advocates on July 1, 1834.

From this time for five years he mixed with his fellows in the Parliament House, and was often the centre of one of its liveliest groups. But he held only two briefs during these years, and he had frequent occasion to sing "Give a Fee" with rueful emphasis as they passed.

The last year of his allowance expired with 1834, and left him carolling in vain. He was determined to make no appeal to his father's generosity, on which he had already drawn sufficiently. It became him to make good his promises, and he was eager and able to do so. From 1835 he supported himself, and if he found it hard to do so, he endured his difficulties gladly. The success of his translation of 'Faust' gave him access to the pages of 'Blackwood's Magazine' and of the 'Foreign Quarterly Review.' Both periodicals were willing to accept what he was most ready to offer, articles introducing and reviewing the works of German writers.

In 1835 he wrote for 'Blackwood's Magazine' a paper on Jean Paul Richter, including many well-translated quo-

tations and a version of the "Legend of the Lorelei"; for the 'Foreign Quarterly Review,' a paper on Menzel's 'German Literature,' and one on Goethe's 'Correspondence with Zelter and Bettina Brentano.' These, with some columns written for journals of secondary importance, brought him £97 for the year 1835, a sum nearly equivalent to his allowance. But the following years, although yielding sufficient money to pay his wants, fell short of this sum, and he was often painfully confronted with the rude fact that the world pays better the dull but essential labour employed in its material wellbeing than the exercise of fresh and willing powers for its mental advance.

In 1836 John Blackie contributed to the 'Foreign Quarterly Review' a paper on Prince Pückler's 'New Tour,' and one on Eckermann's 'Conversations with Goethe,' and wrote other reviews of which it is unnecessary now to recover the traces.

He kept himself afloat with good-humoured courage, and played his part cheerily, as became a philosopher and a student of Greek. It is evident from the titles of some of his articles that he had resumed the study of Greek, which his reading for the Bar had interrupted. The fit of Wordsworthian fervour had passed away, and Goethe had resumed his ascendancy over a nature in which the latent possibilities were too varied to be long subjected to the empire of an influence more isolating than enlarging. He returned to Goethe with relief, recognising in him the working of that Hellenism which he was learning to appreciate at first hand, the large tolerance, the appreciation of "all things lovely and of good report," the moderation in judgment and in action, the making for "equipoise of soul."

The Greek and Goethian "equipoise" was scarcely

attainable by John Stuart Blackie, who was bound to colour every new result of his ethical education with fervent piety. His nature contained elements capable, indeed, of reaching "equipoise," but rather through the "Learn of me" of his Greek Testament than through the irresponsible development of the Greeks, or the elaborate self-culture of their German imitators. Still, in some things he achieved a conscious resemblance to his models, never perfect because it was marred by feelings which they did not possess, whose workings counteracted his tranquillity. He donned a panoply of calm against "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," but had no gift of native invulnerability.

We do not know much of his life during these two years. His lodgings were in York Place or Dublin Street, and he entertained his friends to supper now and again. His gift of versifying was often called upon to distinguish, by appropriate squib or lyric, some festal gathering, and a handful of such songs remains, sung in their day to good old Scottish tunes.

"A Song of Good Fellows" commemorates the Juridical Society in the session from 1834 to 1835, and is a humorous roll-call of its members. It begins :—

> I'll sing you a song of no ancient date,
> A good song of mighty good fellows,
> With good hammering heads and good thundering hands,
> And lungs like a good blowing bellows.
> I'll sing you a song of good honest members
> And presidents of a Society
> That is famed for its learning, its wit, and its taste,
> And for everything good but sobriety.

We can imagine the laughter which the neat portraits drew from all; and the singer did not spare himself :—

> Then B—keye, strange jumble of nonsense and sense,
> A thing half a song, half a sermon ;

I believe that the fellow is made of good stuff,
  But his noddle is muddled with German.
Our wits he'd fain daze with his big foreign phrase,
  His cant of "immutable reason";
To bray like an ass, while for gods they would pass,
  With your German *savans* is no treason.

A drinking-song levelled at the professions—medicine, law, theology, learning—expresses an epicurean contempt for their futility, and celebrates the superior philosophy of "wine, woman, and song."

A graver ditty invites to "Sociality and Activity" on more temperate grounds, and this is a lyric of sufficient beauty to be quoted fully:—

The world drives on and we drive with it,
  And none its course may stay;
When the swarm alights, we must hive with it,
  And with it we must away.
In vain does son of man conceive
  His single self so great;
No act of mortal can deceive
  The measured chart of Fate.
    Then away, away, adown the stream
      With others let us go,
    With friendly heart to share with them
      Their cup of weal or woe.

When shines the sun, when falls the rain,
  The cotter wends his plough;
When blows the wind, when rolls the main,
  The sailor bends his prow.
The heart is glad, the heart is sad,
  As time and chance allow;
And happy never will he be
  Who is not happy now.
    Then away, away, &c.

In vain, in vain we cast our eye
  Into the dreary void;
What was, what is to be, God veils
  From ken of human pride.

He gave thine eye to see His light,
  He gave thy blood to flow,
He gave thy hand to work with might
  The work of life below.
    Then away, away, &c.

'Tis now a race, 'tis now a march,
  Now quick, and now 'tis slow;
'Tis now a proud triumphal arch,
  And now a cottage low.
But still and still it drives along,
  And none its course may stay;
Where the swarm alights, we must hive with it,
  And with it we must away.
    Then away, away, &c.

Amongst his frequent companions about this time were his cousin Robert Wyld and a member of the Juridical Society, Robert Horn, who afterwards became Dean of Faculty. Dr Wyld records the little supper-parties in Dublin Street, where a "rizzared haddie" and a tumbler of toddy formed the time-honoured fare; for these were the days when Edinburgh still dined at four o'clock and supped lightly at nine, putting a kindly hospitality within the reach of all. They were the days, moreover, when guests brought with them the will to enjoy, and when neither host nor guest was so overpowered by the needless needs of a modern dinner that the courses stifled the talk. The memory of those suppers, when a dish of oysters and a haddock prefaced the steaming kettle and the ladles, still lingers in Edinburgh; but wealth, alas! has elected to migrate to its crescents and terraces, and to pile its dull fashions like a tumulus upon the old picturesque hospitality. Men came to talk, not to eat, and much excellent thinking had its apotheosis in acute or humorous give and take while the toddy-ladle made its guarded journey from rummer to glass.

It must have been in the summer of 1836 that John Blackie and Robert Wyld made a pedestrian tour along the south shore of the Firth of Forth, by Tantallon Castle to Berwick, up the valley of the Tweed to Kelso, and home by St Boswells, Minto, Galashiels, and Dalkeith. The tour was uneventful, their pockets were thinly lined, and they had to give up the Bass Rock in face of the greedy demands of the fishermen at Canty Bay; they breakfasted with Dr Aitken at Minto Manse, and made thence for Galashiels. By that time John Blackie's shoes struck work and had to be given up. Their combined funds were a mere remnant to be husbanded for bread and cheese. A new pair of shoes was impossible, so Robert Wyld surrendered his slippers, some sizes too big for his slender cousin, who shuffled along the coach-road to Dalkeith sombrely preoccupied by the effort to keep them on.

Another excursion in the following year introduced him to Bannockburn. His friend Robert Horn accompanied him this time. Mr Horn's home lay about three miles from Falkirk, and made a pleasant stage to which the travellers could return from their patriotic wanderings in its neighbourhood.

They left Edinburgh on the 21st of July, taking the coach through Linlithgow to Carronvale, and visiting the iron-works two miles down the stream, whose bordering of pale willows reminded John Blackie of the sad-coloured olive-yards of Italy. From Carronvale they made daily excursions to the various places hallowed by the memory of William Wallace, the hero of the little scholar at Merson's Academy, Graeme's tomb at Falkirk, Torwood Forest where Wallace lurked for shelter and vantage-ground, the remnants of Bruce's castle on a low wooded hill five miles north of Carronvale. Bannockburn and Stirling were got by heart. From Stirling the friends went forward on July

26, by the winding Forth, up the Teith, through Blair-Drummond to Doune. Here they halted, and came in for a campaigning speech by Mr Fox Maule to the electors of Doune. They visited the castle, and set out for Dunblane, stopping at the "salmon cruive" on the Allan to make a note of its construction. Rain greeted them at Dunblane, and followed them as they wandered to the "Bikes," to Blairlogie and Tillicoultry, but did not greatly spoil their enjoyment of the wooded Ochils.

They reserved the ascent of Ben Cleugh, the highest Ochil, for the following day, when the rain ceased. The hill, which rises just north of Tillicoultry, has a height of 2500 feet, but is not difficult to climb. Mist clung to its top, but parted as they climbed, and they gazed over its riven wreaths to the sunlit landscape below. They returned to Tillicoultry, and made their way to Kinross and to Turfhills, where they found rest and hospitality. On the last day of July the excursion ended, and they went back to Edinburgh by Dunfermline and the steamer.

This walking tour is worthy of the foregoing detail, because it was noted by John Stuart Blackie in later life as having roused to a very marked degree the stirrings of his nature, which were sacred to Scottish influences and to Scottish associations. If Germany made a conquest of his mind, his heart belonged then and always to Scotland, and German thinking was vivified, illumined, and rectified by Scottish feeling.

The short diary which he kept of the ten days' movements includes no mention of his companions, but it seems certain that another young advocate, to be afterwards well known as the kindly and humorous Sheriff Logan, joined the friends before they left Carronvale.

They appear to have made a geological survey of the valleys and hill-ranges which they traversed, and every feature

has its appropriate comment, basalt, trap, and sandstone, every volcanic hollow on the hills, every winding of the sauntering Forth, the springs upon the Ochils, the lines of their billowy slopes.

Another friend of those years was Mr Theodore Martin, who records of John Blackie that his life of strenuous industry, of genial and grateful temper, and of stainless purity, made him a model and example for his comrades in the struggle.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE TEST ACTS.

1837–1840.

An invitation from Robert Wyld took John Blackie to Fifeshire some time in the autumn of 1837. Mr Wyld of Bonnington Bank had bought the property of Gilston, and spent the greater part of the year within its pleasant precincts. His family was large, consisting of seven sons and five daughters, of whom the three eldest, Isabella, Marion, and Eliza, had reached young womanhood. The younger members of the family tailed off into the schoolroom and nursery by gradual descent. The girls, who had burst the chrysalis of schoolroom routine, leaving Mangnall in unconsidered shreds behind them, were tall and straight as young firs; and the tallest and straightest of the three was the youngest, Eliza. She resembled her father both in person and nature, was physically slender and swift, with plentiful fair hair and blue eyes, from which there rayed a ceaseless revelation of the proud, sensitive, loving, striving, strong, and noble soul within. She had reached her eighteenth year, loved her tender-hearted father loyally, stood somewhat in awe of her reserved and methodical mother, felt the upgrowth of intellectual cravings hard to

satisfy at home,—of energies and emotions unemployed and unregarded.

When he arrived, John Blackie gravitated towards this cousin naturally and without loss of time. He looked ill, and was badly dressed; for then, as ever, his necessities were books, not coats and ties, and as he had not yet paid his yearly visit to Aberdeen, his wardrobe was in arrears for want of feminine touches and supplements. But he was quite unconscious of these defects, and was all his life prone to constant fresh surprise, when the "ever womanly" discerned the wear and tear in a habitual garment.

He was the most living, the most intellectual, the most rousing person whom Eliza Wyld had ever met, and it was no wonder that they drew together in mutual sympathy. She represented his ideal more nearly than any woman for whom he had felt a passing attraction; her stateliness of height and manner, her eyes telling in splendid sincerity the story of a nature too strong and far-reaching to veil itself in flimsy reserves, her eager interest in his interests, her generous appreciation of his powers and possibilities, all formed an irresistible magnet, and he sought her society from morning to night.

A tradition lingers of a dance at Gilston, which happened during his visit, and in which he could take no part, for the measured formalities of a tedious quadrille were impossible to one who could have danced with nymphs and fauns to the rhythm of the winds, but who laughed the dull reiterations of the ballroom to scorn. But his cousin had no escape from her duties, so it was arranged between them that he should sit in the recess of a window, and that at the close of every dance she should come back to him and mitigate the weary hours.

At last the mother's eyes opened to the fact of John's absorbed attention to the daughter. He was twenty-eight

years old—had a profession, it is true; but what are briefless advocates? He was badly dressed, and Mrs Wyld was decorous in details; he looked ill; and as for his talents, they were reprehensible, of foreign extraction, heterodox, and unprofitable. So poor John Blackie was bidden go, and the cousins had to part,—although with mutual promise of a constant friendship.

John went to Aberdeen to spend the months which remained of his autumnal holiday at home. It seems to have been during this time that a clever young sculptor, Alexander Ritchie, who had already made an excellent portrait bust of "Delta," and who died in the very dawn of his reputation, attracted by the "ethereal outline" of his features, asked leave to model the translator of 'Faust.' John Blackie sat to him in Marischal Street, and the bust remains, the only likeness that we have of him at the stage of young manhood. It gives the clear-cut features, the upward poise of his head, the tone of thought, the gravity and gentleness of his face in repose, and has, besides, that touch of poetic distinction which reveals enthusiasm and insight in the artist.

Its subject returned to Edinburgh to spend the winter of 1837 and the whole of 1838 in the old struggle for existence, disappointed at the Bar, laborious at his desk, with vivacious quip and jest in society, but with anxiety gnawing at his heart when he faced his prospects in solitude.

His chief articles for 1838 were one on "Jung Stilling and the Religious Literature of Germany," and one on "Müller's Eumenides and English and German Scholarship," both for the 'Foreign Quarterly Review.'

The latter was an attack on the whole school of English scholars, and boldly contrasted their industry and learning with those of German classical students. It was

written hastily, and perhaps rashly, but secured considerable attention.

He was occupied with Greek once more, and had begun a translation of the dramas of Æschylus. This work involved research into many questions which naturally belonged to it, and amongst these he took special pains with the interesting subject of metre, and particularly of Greek metre and music. Encouraged by Sir William Hamilton, he produced a long and valuable article, written in 1838, and published in the 'Foreign Quarterly Review' for July 1839, under the title of 'Greek Rhythms and Metres.'

Such comprehensive study implied the purchase of many books, and their cost would have made havoc with his precarious income had not an occasional draft from Mr Blackie provided for this scholarly outlay, and left to his son the satisfaction of keeping body and soul together with the fees for his articles. This process, too, was fortified by frequent hampers from home. His work provoked a rhymed "Fantasy" of gods and goddesses, which indicates a transient inoculation from the manner of Keats and Shelley, as well as an effort to steep himself in Hellenic imaginings, and so refresh and support his understanding of the great dramatist.

The too ample leisure which his profession allotted to him was filled, therefore, with strenuous work and aims, and in a direction which was happily the right one for his career, although at one time he was distressed with sore misgivings on the subject. But this conflict between inclination and necessity was nearing its close, to give way to a conflict in which both were victoriously allied against a common foe.

Marischal College stood alone amongst universities in the humiliating distinction of possessing no Latin Chair. The

endowment of such a chair had been recommended by Sir Robert Peel's University Commission, and Mr Alexander Bannerman, the Aberdeen member of Parliament, was anxious to promote the recommendation by his influence with the Whig Ministry of that time. He succeeded in persuading the Government to establish the chair, and almost simultaneously he secured, through Lord John Russell, the Queen's command that Government should consult his wishes as to the choice of its first occupant. Mr Bannerman was an old friend of Mr Blackie's, and kept up a correspondence with him, which was chiefly concerned with Whig doings and Radical misdoings. Mr Blackie acquainted his friend in London with John's occupations and successes. The article on Greek Rhythm and its philosophy had made some stir, and Mr Bannerman was already aware of the writer's prestige as a Latinist. He asked him to send in testimonials of his fitness for a professorial post. These were amply forthcoming, signed by men eminent as scholars, amongst whom Sir William Hamilton, Professor Gerhard, and Professor Moir may be mentioned. They were deemed satisfactory; and Mr Bannerman's candidate received the appointment in May 1839, with the title of Regius Professor of Humanity in Marischal College. The question of emolument was not yet decided.

Dr Melvin, who had been made Rector of the Grammar-School in Aberdeen and Lecturer on Humanity in the College, was accounted the best Latinist of the city, and when the news of John Blackie's appointment arrived, his admirers were loud in denouncing what they declared to be a "Whig job." Melvin was a Tory, and although a minute and accurate grammarian, he belonged to the party in education wedded to old methods. Mr Bannerman sought to enlarge the scope and raise the standard of attainment in

university teaching. His aim was one which Dr Melvin would have refused to further, while the younger man, who was appointed at his recommendation, was possessed with a keen recognition of the failure of an outworn pedantry to make the young, ardent students of a literature human and historical, in which nations speak aloud across two millenniums. The instinct for this human element in Latin, which German teaching had fostered in John Blackie, qualified him for the chair more than his acquaintance with the language, because the chair was to be a step in advance, not a mere final stage of schoolmastering. It was to form a source of stimulus, to cherish a living scholarship, not to impose a coping-stone upon a crumbling structure. It was hardly to be expected that Mr Bannerman would undergo the toil of getting a new chair endowed by Government for the sake of filling it with a Professor opposed to his own progressive views in education, although it was most natural that Dr Melvin's friends, who were justified in admiring the excellence of his teaching, should protest against the appointment of a younger man.

The appointment was made, however, and John Blackie held her Majesty's commission in which it was embodied. But, as he said long after, "I found a hindrance—a pentagram—in my way, like Mephistopheles, in virtue of which he could not get out and I could not get in."

This hindrance was the Westminster Confession of Faith. It was incumbent on all professors, both theological and other than theological, to sign the Calvinistic clauses of this tough and wordy document. Propounded in 1647, ratified by the Act of Security, and incorporated in the Union Treaty in 1707, it was provided that "all professors shall acknowledge and profess and shall subscribe to the Confession of Faith as the confession of their faith"; and further, "shall practise and conform to the worship presently

in use in the Church of Scotland, and submit to the government and discipline thereof."

It had been the custom of not wholly conforming professors to subscribe the Confession of Faith with a reservation, which may be termed historical. An excellent divine explained that "the Confession of Faith was a compromise between antagonistic parties, and was purposely so worded that one chapter contradicted the other; and besides, the section which declared the Bible to be the only rule of faith to Protestants, contradicted the whole." He advised John Blackie to sign without "impertinent scruples." But, with accustomed conscientiousness, the latter betook himself to study of the Confession. He describes the results of his study in the "Notes":—

> At a distance I had seen no difficulty in the matter: it seemed to me that a theologian signed the articles in the strict sense, a layman more loosely. But on a nearer view this difference vanished. To sign a creed was to say that you believed the creed—that the creed was yours. When this conviction first flashed upon me, I was horror-struck. I could not sign a Calvinist Confession of Faith without declaring myself a Calvinist: I could not sign any Confession of Faith without signing away my freedom of thought.

It seemed for a time as if there were no place in life for a man "who had sucked in the milk of truthfulness too long from the New Testament, to tolerate anything like double-dealing." He had come to Aberdeen on receiving the appointment; he had written in the first flush of gratification to his friend and cousin to seek the sympathy in success which he had long enjoyed in struggle; he saw opening before him the very career of which he had dreamed in Göttingen and Rome. And on its threshold lay this sinister portent, this "pentagram." It was impossible to subscribe. Father and friends urged every argument against his impracticable attitude. The example of

Dr Paley, of countless clergymen whose lives declared their piety, was pressed upon him. At last a way was opened which promised an honest compromise. He could not subscribe *simpliciter:* he might subscribe with a declaration of his attitude, which, publicly made and publicly advertised, should inform those concerned that his subscription did not imply an avowal of the creed each clause expressed, but an agreement to respect that creed in the exercise of his professorial duties.

His signature had to be affixed in presence of the moderator and members of the Presbytery of Aberdeen. These met on July 2 at the East Church session-house in full conclave, and were duly constituted, the Rev. Adam Corbett being moderator. The varied business of this Presbytery meeting included its witness of John Stuart Blackie's signature of the Confession of Faith, and its grant to him of a certificate testifying to such signature, which certificate it was incumbent on him to present to the Senatus Academicus of Marischal College before the latter body could receive him into membership and instal him in the Humanity Chair. He presented himself at the meeting, signed the Confession, and then, before the clerk handed over his certificate, he rose and made the following declaration :—

I wish it to be distinctly understood, and I request that the clerk be ordered to put it on record, that I have signed the Confession of Faith, not as my private confession of faith, nor as a churchman learned in theology, but in my public professorial capacity, and in reference to University offices and duties merely. I am a warm friend of the Church of Scotland, and have been accustomed to worship according to the Presbyterian form, and will continue to do so, but I am not sufficiently learned in theology to be able to decide on many articles of the Confession of Faith.

Mr Pirie, one of the members of Presbytery, said "that this declaration should have been made prior to signing,

but that the Presbytery sitting there had nothing to do with any gentleman's mental reservations, and further, that such explanations could not be put on record."

John Blackie gave notice that if his explanation were not entered on the books of the Presbytery, it would appear in the public papers. The certificate was then completed and handed to him.

That evening he sent a copy of his declaration to the editors of the two leading newspapers in Aberdeen, and it appeared along with an account of the Presbytery proceedings in the 'Aberdeen Journal' on July 3d, while the 'Aberdeen Constitutional' contained a similar report in its issue two days later. The editor of this newspaper published, besides the declaration, the letter in which it was embodied, a step not contemplated by the writer, who had expressed the context somewhat rashly; and in a letter to the editor of the 'Aberdeen Journal,' written for publication and appearing in the issue of July 10, he desired that the phrases in question should be held "*pro non scripta*," but he maintained: "I deem it beyond my power as a man of honour to alter or modify in any way the phraseology of the declaration I thought it my duty to make before the Presbytery."

The publication of these letters and of the test of his declaration roused a nest of clerical hornets, and it is interesting to note that the members of Presbytery who were most powerfully stirred to take action were mainly men of the Evangelical party, which fourteen years later was to effect the abolition of University Tests.

The Rev. Adam Corbett issued a circular to the members of Presbytery on July 13, convening a meeting for August 12, to consider John Blackie's letters in the Aberdeen papers. A full meeting assembled, which included Dr Forbes and Dr Forsyth. The obnoxious documents were

produced and read. Mr James Edmond, Advocate, then appeared on behalf of representatives of most of the Aberdeen parishes, and presented a petition signed by a formidable array of elders, defenders of the Confession. This petition protested against the certificate granted to John Stuart Blackie, on the ground that he had not given the unqualified acknowledgment and profession of the Confession of Faith which, the petitioners held, was required by law.

Mr Edmond, after presenting this petition, subjoined a paper which offered proofs of the allegations contained in the petition, and both documents were ordered to be authenticated by the moderator and clerk. These proofs were the letters and declaration by John Blackie printed in the Aberdeen newspapers. The Presbytery, after deliberation, decided to call a meeting for September 3, and to cite John Stuart Blackie to appear on that day to make satisfactory explanation, and in the meantime to forfeit his certificate until such explanation was made.

It had not occurred to the reverend body that the last decision was not within its legal power, and he, being better advised, retained his certificate. He went to Edinburgh and there consulted several legal friends, amongst whom Mr Robert Horn and Mr Barron—a hard-headed lawyer from Aberdeen—may be noted. He supplied them with full notes of the two meetings of Presbytery, and of his citation to appear before that convened for September 3. Both gentlemen sent him opinions on his position, and advised him to decline the jurisdiction of the Presbytery with regard to his certificate and appearance in person, but to meet their ruling to the extent of sending a written explanation in the hands of an advocate, who should represent him on September 3.

Mr Alexander Anderson therefore received his instruc-

tions in the case, and laid on the table on that day a letter from his client, which had been written with serious deliberation, and expressed his position as fully as it was necessary to do. This letter was read to a full Presbytery, and was authenticated in due course. It was a direct blow, an attack on what may be termed the temporal power of the Church of Scotland. Something of *lèse-majesté* in its tone affronted the immediate dignity of the Presbytery of Aberdeen, and a motion was introduced and seconded condemning the explanation offered as "unsatisfactory." Dr Forbes of Old Machar and Dr Forsyth sought to amend the motion by proposing to refer the whole matter to the next meeting of Synod, but they were not supported, and the Presbytery carried, against their dissent, the final motion that "Mr John Stuart Blackie has not signed the Confession of Faith as the confession of his faith in conformity with the terms of the Act of Parliament; and further, that he does not consider himself bound by the formula signed by him on the 2d day of July last."

The reverend body sent copies of this finding to the Principal and Secretary of the Senatus Academicus, a timid corporation, which might at this juncture have stepped into the breach and inscribed the champion of academical liberty upon its roll-call, but which preferred "not to proceed to fix a day for the admission of Mr Blackie while the obstacle or objection created by the Presbytery's finding remains." The Professors of Marischal College were, as a matter of fact, supporters of Dr Melvin, who had given the extra lectures on Latin since 1836, and they were not unhopeful that, should the Presbytery succeed in quashing Mr Blackie's appointment, their candidate might take his place.

Their attitude decided the next step for the Professor-

elect. The Queen's Commission was in his hands, so was the Aberdeen Presbytery's certificate that he had signed the Confession of Faith. He raised an action of declarator against the Senatus Academicus of the Aberdeen University. Its members shirked the contest, and put forward the Presbytery as the real party in defence. That body lodged a minute craving to be sisted as defenders, and engaged Mr Neaves to plead their cause. Mr Robert Hunter represented John Blackie, and the case came before Lord Cunninghame. It was decided in favour of the pursuer on the ground "that the Presbytery had no *title* to appear—their duty in the matter of witnessing a subscription being *ministerial* only." His Lordship held that Professor Blackie's error "lay in his thinking it necessary to state in any form that which all mankind would have implied." The Presbytery wished to appeal to the Inner House, but the case was refused, and they had to be contented with paying only their own costs, while the Professor discharged those with which the proceedings had saddled him. These were beyond his own means, but Miss Menie Stodart came to the rescue and lent him the money needed.

This case was one of much greater importance than at first appeared. The University Test Acts, how necessary soever they were, when they were first made binding, for the preservation of the Presbyterian Church in Scotland, and for the exclusion of the leaven of Episcopacy from the national schools and universities, had fulfilled their purpose, and cumbered now the growth which once they guarded. They were a stumbling-block to the thoughtful, a formula accepted with closed eyes by the worldly-wise. The men who most obstinately opposed John Stuart Blackie's election, incapable of appreciating his deep-seated piety, which was of the spirit and therefore living, submit-

ting to no trammels of the letter, were honest enough according to their lights, which imposed a political document upon the conscience, and made its clauses more binding than the eternal laws of God. Their zeal was undeniable,—they were the men who, four years later, sacrificed manse and stipend for conscience' sake, and, with the superb inconsistency of enthusiasts, left the very Church whose connection with the State and whose hold upon education they had so strenuously upheld. The Disruption took place in 1843, and ten years later the men who made the Disruption, finding themselves excluded from the chief places in Scottish Universities, effected an abolition of University Tests, which confined subscription of the Confession of Faith to Professors of Divinity,—a remnant of the ancient order which has recently been swept away.

Two years elapsed between the meeting of Presbytery on July 2, 1839, and the failure of the same body to establish by law their finding against Professor Blackie. He spent these years in Edinburgh, taking up his old quarters in Dublin Street. He was occupied as before in writing for the Reviews and Magazines, in the study of Greek, and particularly of the dramas of Æschylus and of Euripides, and in the study of German Literature.

In the 'Foreign Quarterly Review' for January 1840 he published a paper on the 'Memoirs of Rahel,' and in July one upon 'Euripides,' while in the same year he wrote for 'Blackwood's Magazine' no fewer than three articles,—one in July upon Weber's 'Germany,' one in October upon the "Austrians," and one in December called "Reminiscences of 1813 in Germany." To 'Tait's Magazine' he contributed in the same year a series of articles on "Student Life in Germany," giving some of the student songs with their melodies. Other articles were on the "Rights

of the Christian People" and on "Apostolical Succession"; while he supplied the Poet's Corner in the same Magazine with "My Loves," "Night," and the "Wail of an Idol."

Of all this work, the Burschen songs, translated into spirited English, naturally became most popular. A friend wrote from St Lucia:—

What a pity you are not here to sing your own German translations, which have found their way out here! The Chief-Justice [Reddie, an old Göttingen Bursch] was most anxious to know who had done the "Landesvater" into English, as well as the other ballads. I, of course, told him; not forgetting the summons of declarator, and all about the subscription of articles. The Justice sends his best acknowledgments to you, and begs you may persevere, and succeed alike in your versions and in your declarator.

Dr Kirchner, the translator of 'Self-Culture' into German, acknowledged in generous terms, in an obituary notice of Professor Blackie, the valuable work done in those years of stress and struggle on behalf of German literature, and ranked him with Thomas Carlyle in this field of labour.

His friend Mr Anderson of Banchory was also much pleased with the Burschen songs, and somewhat surprised at his taking up historical subjects. He wrote a pregnant word of advice on this:—

It is extremely useless to launch on such an ocean without a well-defined course and port of arrival. It will not do to hunt all and sundry game that may start up in this immense forest. Read always with a pen in your hand, an eye for opposite sides—with a deep slow pulse of thought, and a clear steady notion of your own standpoint or whereabouts.

And in reference to the declarator:—

I trust that as interdicts are in fashion, at least against clergymen, you will not fail to get one more, or whatever else may be necessary for your installation in a very pretty building about seventeen miles from the manse of Banchory.

Amongst his private interests was the correspondence which he maintained with Miss Eliza Wyld. The ardour with which this had been inaugurated had mellowed into tranquil friendship. He supplied his cousin with books, and drew from her the vivid criticisms which her rapid discernment suggested. He was much interested in her views of all the questions which occupied his own mind, and in one letter of 1840 alluded to his debt to her in "ideas." This letter speaks of an illness from which she was suffering.

I shall be glad [he says] to hear that you have recovered your wonted health and—spirits I need not add, for I am told you amused yourself making faces at the doctor all the time the grave fool was bleeding you for a complaint he did not understand.

But the high spirits were perhaps due to a touch of fever, for the deeper mind of Eliza Wyld was hostile to such freaks, and a slight delicacy of constitution had imparted to it a tendency to melancholy, strangely consorted with her swift movements and responsiveness to jest and humour. She already desired as her ideal temperament "contentment," to which John Blackie characteristically replied:—

The law of the universe is *Perfectionation*—that is to say, progression from bad to good, from good to better, and from better to best. And this progression is effected by *activity*. We make the Sabbath the first day of the week—very foolish! It is and was the last day of the week, and is a symbol of enjoyment in work done during the six days that precede, work being the very perfect business and definition of life.

There was no doubt in his own mind about his duty. He set to work, without a murmur against Presbytery or University, biding his time in respect of both, and flinging himself with spirit, proof against "the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune," into the tasks that lay to hand.

A glimpse of his exuberance in costume at this time is given in some doggerel lines by Mr Robert Horn, from which we may borrow a descriptive couplet:—

> "He'll flourish bludgeons and wear tartan breeks,
> A monstrous stock, and long hair o'er the cheeks."

No doubt the Professor-elect startled the staid proprieties of Moray Place in garb which verged on the casual and not on the modish.

CHAPTER IX.

INSTALLATION AND MARRIAGE.

1841-1842.

THE early part of the year 1841 was productive of some well-written papers. The 'Foreign Quarterly Review' for January contained an account of the 'Memoirs of Varnhagen von Ense,' and its April number introduced Ludwig Uhland and his followers, grouped as "Suabian Poets," to the reading public.

'Blackwood's Magazine' for February contained a review of the 'Memoirs of Baron Strombeck,' whose account of King Jerome Buonaparte's dramatic appearance in Westphalia, as its satrap for Napoleon, was full of interest for the world of fifty years ago. In August, John Blackie also contributed to 'Maga' a notable article on the "Traits and Tendencies of German Literature," enlarging with point on the influence of the State upon the national mind.

For 'Tait's Magazine' he continued the popular "Burschen Melodies," and wrote an article on "Protestantism, Puseyism, and Catholicism," contributing to the Poet's Corner "The Emigrant's Song," "To a Caged Eagle," and "My Lady's Picture."

The routine of this year's spring was varied by an episode,

sudden, tumultuous, and fleeting, which can scarcely be ignored. He fell violently in love with a lady whose identity the fragmentary indications of flashing eyes and imperious temper, with the solitary information that her name was Mary, cannot help us to discover. He met her once without speaking to her, a second time with five minutes' ordinary talk, and after, dreamt of her for two months together. Then came a fortunate Wednesday evening, when he was permitted to escort her home from a party, and when she graciously gave him leave to call. This he was prompt to do, and his passion growing peremptory, he rashly proposed and was refused. In the deep dejection which followed he asked advice from his cousin Eliza Wyld. She gave him the best counsel that a girl could give, veiling her surprise in sympathetic interest. She pointed out to him that so sudden an offer would startle and repel any woman whose affection was worth winning, and that he must give her time to become accustomed to his wooing. John was grateful for this advice, and adventured further addresses with more deliberation, finding in Mary's mother a friendly advocate of his suit. But late in July, when his Chair was won, and when his proposal was backed with professorial dignity, he returned to the charge in vain. Mary cared not for him, and for a day he was steeped in misery. Then he called at the house in Royal Terrace, where the Wylds were living, and found Eliza in the drawing-room arranging flowers. Her quick glance fathomed his condition, and she sat down beside him to listen to his story. Her sympathy for his disappointment was very genuine, although she was woman enough at once to resent Mary's coquetry, and to be glad that she had failed to recognise the worth of what she had refused. She said, "I feel so much for you, I feel all your sorrow." John Blackie rose, took her hand, kissed it, and went away.

But the memory of that consoling kiss pursued him. He went away healed of his grievous hurt. The soft hand of his gentle cousin had salved the wound and wiped away its remembrance. The infatuation, which had absorbed him for four months, lifted and left him free, with "a new song in his mouth."

There can be no doubt that the upwelling of her heart in such full-flowing sympathy, neither stinted by petty reserves nor discoloured by resentment, filled his mind with the vision of her great womanliness, strong to purify and to heal. He left suddenly because the revulsion overwhelmed him; but the enchantress was cast out, and in her place was throned the image of the noble woman whom he set himself to win for his wife. He had made up his mind upon what grounds a man should marry. In a letter of this year, the subject being urgent, he wrote:—

> A pair of wise hands to keep your house in order? no doubt; but I despise a man who will marry a woman merely or mainly to keep his house. I have made up my mind to marry for love and spiritual sympathy, or not at all.

The month of July came to a close with this episode. The squares and terraces of Edinburgh were emptying fast, and Mr and Mrs Wyld were on the eve of their departure for Gilston. John sent his cousin a gift of Wordsworth's Poems in six beautiful volumes. She was not to share the family removal, but had accepted an invitation to spend the month of August at Innerleithen with relatives who had both insight and sympathy. John Blackie was one of their favourites, and when he came to the manse at Innerleithen on an improvised visit to the minister there,—an old comrade, on whose hospitality he could rely,—they made him welcome to join the family diversions. But a great awe fell upon him as he drew into closer companionship with Eliza Wyld. How could

he hope that this stately creature, from whom his allegiance had swerved for a space, and who had withdrawn into the bastioned reserve where women guard their hearts, should condescend to him? In the humility of a great and reverent love he sought a woman's counsel. She bade him hope, and promised him an opportunity. One evening when he called he found Eliza at home alone, beguiling her solitude with a song,—for a melodious voice was one of her many gifts,—and without hazarding a commonplace greeting, which might dull the edge of his daring, he entreated her at once to be his wife.

Next day John Blackie wrote to Mr Wyld to ask him for his daughter, and the letter produced consternation at Gilston. The gift was curtly denied, and Eliza was bidden return to her family. She found father, mother, and brothers in arms against her engagement, and all September she bore much upbraiding. But she had given her heart and her promise both, and it did not occur to her that it was possible to recall her gifts. Her lover wrote to her constantly, and in a sonnet celebrated the meteoric light which he had mistaken for love's dawn, whose day was all the time broadening into beauty.

There are two loves, fiery the one and fierce,
And as stray stars that scare the sleepy night
Sudden and strange, God-sent to cleave and pierce
The inmost marrow with resistless might;
The other gentle, as on springy steep
The well that grows to a brook and to a river,
And mellow as rich autumn lights that sweep
The green empurpled hills. From eager quiver
Cupid with that first smote to wound—with this
To heal me (blessèd in both wound and healing!),
That I, his bard, might know by sure revealing
The twin Avatars of his bane and bliss:
Fierce flame from Mary's keen electric eye,
And calm warm sun from Eliza's tempered sky.

Eliza wrote to him from Gilston to describe the disapprobation of her engagement which prevailed there, and he cheered her constancy with hopeful letters.

The storm blows loudest when it is nearest the calm. Do not vex yourself, my sweetest.

The world is wide—hope is a gallant rider,
God is a good provider.

He was in Edinburgh for three weeks of September, busy with his introductory lecture. "I must quarry out and build up," he wrote, "something like a decent Christian architecture of these harsh and heathenish Romans, whom I hate."

It was not altogether wonderful that Mr Wyld should have misgivings about the engagement. John Blackie had chiefly impressed the outer circle of his cousinhood with his volatility and want of the virtues most held in esteem by respectability. He had changed his mind so often with regard to a profession; he made a precarious living by the pen, which the well-to-do deemed then a paltry trade; he dressed badly; his manners were abrupt—they called them "harum-scarum, the Blackie manners"; they did not believe that he would hold his professorship for six months—they gave him just that time "to go to the devil." One member of the family called on him at Dublin Street to expostulate about his manners. We may almost suppose that they were at the bottom of the family opposition.

He was affronted at the expostulation, and showed some prick of pride; but he wrote to Eliza:—

If there be anything about my manner that offends you, or is calculated to offend other people, preach me a sermon on that text, and I will listen to you and obey you like a child. You have the privilege to preach to me now and always.

This well-placed love, meeting with such generous re-

sponse, quickened his deep-seated piety. He wrote on September 4 :—

I love and reverence everything that Jesus taught, and I know by experience that there is no satisfying bliss for the soul except in the regeneration of the heart and the renovation of the life *through all its daily details*, by the doctrine of love which Christ preached; and if you can find anything in me which you can like, anything that you can esteem, believe me, I have that mainly from an ancient intimate acquaintance with, and practical close-clinging to, the heart-reaching precepts of the Gospel.

Eliza Wyld was a new revelation of that Gospel to him, and how gladly he read it!

God preaches His living Gospel in the heart and life of a glowing, open, truthful woman. Eyes, open eyes, and always opening wider, and the heart beneath calm, yet eager. There is a blessing with you, Eliza, because you are true-hearted, and because you can see.

John Blackie in a manly letter refused to accept his dismissal at Mr Wyld's hands, and intimated that only the daughter and not the father could break the bond which united them, and that his trust in her steadfastness forbade him to fear such a rupture. The efforts of the family were therefore directed to make Eliza give him up. She was forbidden to write to him and to receive his letters. For a time she could only send him an occasional line, saddened by the displeasure which surrounded her. But he wrote to her every few days brave and tender letters, which her father handed to her often without question,—for although he was hostile to the engagement, Mr Wyld did not stoop to the meaner forms of interference.

John Blackie left Edinburgh for Aberdeen about the 20th of September, and stayed for a time with his father, who had removed to a larger house in King Street. Mr Wyld sent him no answer, but the young Professor refused to be snubbed. At last he received a demand from Mrs Wyld for the letters which Eliza had already written to

him. He declined to return them, and wrote to the daughter comforting and reassuring her with full measure of his affection. Her patience under the strain at home was at length exhausted, and one morning late in October she rose very early, before any one else was up, dressed herself, and left the house with four shillings and sixpence in her purse. She walked to Leven, and on the road she met the workers on the farm at Gilston going to her father's fields. They stared to see their master's daughter abroad and on foot at such an hour, and she was afraid that they might go to the house and tell the servants; but she got safely to Leven in time for the early boat to Leith, where she took a cab and drove to a relative's house in Edinburgh. The kind friends, although amazed at her appearance, welcomed her to their home, and she stayed there till February. She refused to go back so long as her correspondence with John Blackie was forbidden, and she bade her parents understand that she considered herself irrevocably pledged to be his wife. She sent him a watch-guard made of her hair, and the gift relieved him from all fear of her giving way. He began his work in happy mood.

His installation took place on November 1, and was graced by the presence of the Provost and Magistrates of Aberdeen in their robes of office, while he himself wore a lustrous gown, befrogged and ample, which cost but three guineas. He confronted his first academical audience successfully, and the lecture which began his forty years' professoriate made no little stir. In it he gave warning that he meant by Latin no mere routine of conjugations and declensions, but the "living vesture" of the thought and action of historical generations.

The question [he wrote afterwards] whether the conjunction *ut* in certain cases should be followed by the imperfect or the perfect subjunctive, seemed to me not of the slightest significance in reference

to the main end of classical education. *What I wanted was, through Latin, to awaken wide human sympathies, and to enlarge the field of vision.*

The lecture was reported in the Aberdeen newspapers according to the varying taste of their editors, the one giving an excellent abstract of the matter, the others creaming off its exuberances for the entertainment of their readers. Exuberances there certainly were, and a far too exalted estimate of the intelligence of his class; for his mind, matured by foreign schools of education, soared above the standard at home. But the lecture drew commendation from the more scholarly Aberdonians, and seated him with distinction in his Chair.

Miss Menie Stodart had in the meantime chosen and furnished for him a small house in Dee Street, New Aberdeen, and he removed his books and luggage thither during the first week of November. On the 7th he wrote the first letter to his promised wife from the home to which he was to bring her in the following April.

It is a lovely day [he wrote]; the bright sun is shining on the broad blue sea that bounds the horizon before the window of my snug little study here: the many-coloured pennons and flags of the ships are sporting in the breeze.

His sister Christina came to stay with him, and the learned pair conversed in Latin at their meals, which were solemnised by a Latin benediction. He went on Sundays "to sit once a-day in the loft of the College Church like a sober, staid, proper Professor." He was making plans already for their wedding trip,—wished to take his wife to Germany, to Italy, but feared that many immediate expenses would blight such hopes. "We must content ourselves with lodgings at Banchory-Ternan, a bonnie, bonnie place—or elsewhere on Deeside, I fear."

Their prospects were of pinched housekeeping and small

economies. The Professor refused to believe that Mr Wyld would persist in his displeasure, but counted on no dowry and made light of all allusion to her inheritance.

> You shall soon [he wrote to her] see your father, dearest, sitting as comfortably at my fireside as he does at his own. I believe that the only invincible power in the world is love; I shall ply your father with that and that only, and if I do not conquer—Christianity never conquered.

The Senatus Academicus proved hard to deal with. The new Chair of Humanity received from endowment £200 a-year, but the fees, which should have amounted to three guineas for each student during the session, were cut down to less than one-half of that sum, and Professor Blackie was asked to accept the pittance which the University had paid to Dr Melvin—one guinea for each member of the first class and half-a-guinea for each of the second class. It was a preposterous demand, and no doubt was intended to indicate that the Chair of Humanity did not occupy the same exalted academical position as those which had already made Marischal College renowned for its pedantry. The young Professor made honourable resistance, and the fees were raised to a guinea and a half for the bajans and fifteen shillings for the semis. For the modest endowment and these fees he was expected to give nine lectures weekly, and he grumbled, not at the disproportion between the fees and the work, but at the limited number of hours allotted to him, and at the attempt to degrade the Chair of Humanity to a subsidiary place in the scale of importance. For through the Chair of Humanity he set himself to reform the whole system of Scottish University teaching, and he needed to marshal on his side every aid, real and apparent, which could secure to him the attention both of practical and political educationists. His work in this direction, which had begun in Göttingen,

when he wrote his first appeal to the Scottish public, was stimulated by the state of education in Aberdeen, petrified and sterile, and it took from this time a concentrated force from the pressure of daily experience which was to make it the influential factor in later though still incomplete reforms. But this subject is too emphatically connected with Professor Blackie to be touched lightly in a chapter which deals with its inception merely.

He had worked for four weeks, making experiences, afterwards to be noted, when the wind began to veer with regard to his engagement. A faint favouring breeze arose; several members of the Wyld family criticised unfavourably the attitude at Gilston, and spoke on behalf of the Professor, openly taking his part. Events were conspiring for him. It could no longer be gainsaid that he held the Chair of Humanity in Aberdeen and filled it with honour. Mr Wyld's heart was softening towards his daughter, whose presence he missed, and whose strength of purpose he began to realise. Friends on all sides upheld her conduct, and censured the opposition to so fitting a marriage. It was evident that no unreasonable wrath would frighten Eliza Wyld into a cowardly renunciation. She meant to stand by the man who loved her, whose intellect and aspiring career she esteemed far above the comforts of Gilston.

Had it been possible, John Blackie would have come to marry her in Edinburgh; but his salary was not to fall due till January, and the fees were in arrears, many of the students not paying till the session was near its close. Not till April could the little house be fully arrayed to greet his bride, and he had settled to marry her in that month,—in Edinburgh, if there was no relenting; at her home, if Mr Wyld permitted.

In the meantime he was occupied with making every

kind of experiment in teaching which should rouse the interest of his "boys." He was translating Horace's Odes into blank verse—a version which he never published, but the interest of which animated his work at the College. "Man is a singing animal," he said, and to rouse up every available faculty in his class he took to poring, till long past midnight, over "unintelligible erudition about old Greek music." To revive the classic union of verse with melody, he spent hours in wedding Horace's Odes to musical measure, and in Spohr's 'Faust' and "Maggie Lauder" found airs that consorted with their rhythm. Appealing to both ear and eye, he covered the class-room walls with diagrams, drawn by himself. He wrote: "I seek to put modern blood and life into these dry old formulas." The task was hard, and many of those dull young Aberdonians must have remained stony ground, in spite of all his vigorous delving and harrowing; but a few gave way, and he recorded:—

> I have some half-a-dozen very fine lads, with whom, I think, I have succeeded in setting their souls astir. We have eight of them to breakfast every Saturday morning.

It was no easy matter to keep order in a class of boys fresh from the grammar-school, where they had submitted to the harsh discipline of the tawse, and were too rough and unmannerly to understand the kindly humour of the new Professor. He began by taking them for students and treating them as intelligently anxious to work, and was sore put to it to reduce the noisy crew to submission when, mistaking his gentleness for weakness, they asserted their natural savagery in daily disturbances. He had recourse to his only defensive weapon, fines sternly imposed, and so kept moderate whip-hold of the team. Dr Forbes White tells us in 'Alma Mater':—

By his good nature and by his cutting wit he soon mastered the turbulent element, and by my year '43-'44, an easy, natural good behaviour was the rule. He was loved, and this love got him respect. He was of course fond of jokes and of extreme statements which caused a laugh, but the class went on sweetly and merrily, busily at work, perfectly under control,—a class entirely different from any other in the ease of its manner.

He found his rooms in Dee Street very small,—they cramped the march to which he beat his thoughts into language. His maid-servant, too, neglected her duties,—he needed a wise manager at home.

The Professors were bending from their first formality, and called upon him. They were not interesting, and it is to be feared that he did not sun himself in their condescension. He excepted Professor Lizars from the "catalogue of nobodies," and Mr Brown, the Professor of Greek, who was "jovial and liked a joke, and was by no means at fault in his particular line."

He managed to visit Edinburgh for three days of the Christmas week, and spent them with his friends, seeing much of his promised wife, and growing more aware of her delight in all things lovely and of good report. He found her brave and cheerful, speaking tenderly of her father, but resolved to abide by her lover. He wrote to her after his return more frequently, and if possible more devotedly, than ever. She was reading Wordsworth and Coleridge with full sympathy, and her pleasure in their poetry drew from him a characteristic acknowledgment:—

Poetry is my religion, my all. I love the Gospel of the blessed Jesus, because it is instinct in every line with the poetry of emotion and of conduct. It is the beautiful, the devoted in conduct, to which I cling.

It was on the 25th of January 1842 that he gave his first public and popular lecture. The movement for popular lectures had just begun, and John Blackie threw

himself into it with vigour, the first Professor in Scotland who did so. His audience was large, and the subject—"The Principles of Poetry and the Fine Arts"—had the advantage of being new to the Aberdonians. He wrote to Eliza Wyld on the following day:—

My lecture last night, so far as I could read its reception myself, and was informed by others, was a decided hit. There's for you! Platonism preached to the hard granite ears of Aberdeen, and with applause! I am a little proud of the achievement. And such an audience, overflowing! Three cheers for the little Professor! Hurrah! The ladies are now most mathematically convinced that the difference between the estimation in which they are held here, and that which is enjoyed by the Hottentot Venus, depends not on association and capricious taste, but on eternal, immutable, and divine laws.

In this lecture he sounded a *Leitmotif*, on which he dwelt with varying emphasis all his life. Indeed by this time he had chosen and proclaimed the texts on which utterance was given to him, and what other texts were left for later years were but contexts or revised readings of those.

He read this lecture, but was sensible of the "bondage of the paper," and it set him thinking upon the whole subject of public oratory.

I have been set upon a new scent this week [he wrote], and my ambition has got a new push. It was the lecture, I think, that did it. I will not be satisfied now till I become a great public speaker. I have gone to Calvert, our elocutionist, and am studying the art of speaking and reading, and mean to educate myself regularly for a lecturer. The field of good here open for me is immense: I see no bound to it. My intention is to free myself altogether from the bondage of the paper, and get to preach real poetry and eloquence. A bold cast for an erect soul, looking not down upon slavish paper! This is the problem that possesses and vexes me now. Let me bellow my pedagogic thunders grandly!

Busy with his translation of the Odes of Horace, with

his diagrams, views of Rome, and historical lectures, with the varied devices by which he sought to rouse minds dulled by grammar and the tawse, he won some return at last, and in the end of January was able to write:—

My boys in the first class, who began with 50, now read 120 lines in an hour quite fluently; that's something! Progress!

Special studies filled the hours at leisure from his classes, and these seemed to have been more particularly the translation of 'Æschylus' into English verse, a review of poetical measures, and an investigation into the whole question of Scottish education.

The first session came to a close at the end of March, and his marriage was fixed for April 19. In February Mr Wyld came to Drummond Place and took his daughter home. The family had returned to 32 Royal Terrace. They had now consented to the inevitable, and Mr Wyld, from the moment of his surrender, treated Eliza with the utmost tenderness. He gave her a handsome sum of money for her preparations, which were now in full swing.

The Professor left Aberdeen on April 4, bent on walking off the oppression accumulated by seven months of constant work. He carried out his plan, and walked by Banchory and Braemar to Coupar-Angus, where he caught the coach to Edinburgh. The journey thus prolonged took about a week, but refreshed him thoroughly. From the manse of Banchory, where he rested the first night, he sent his bride a lyric:—

Wherefore now, nor song nor sonnet
  Write I thee, Eliza dear?
Love's a plant—the blossom on it
  Rhyme, child of the vernal year.
With the full-grown time it ceases,
Waning as the fruit increases:
  Therefore now, nor song nor sonnet
  Write I thee, Eliza dear.

Ever, as I would be chiming
  Pretty, pointed lines to thee,
Seems a power to check my rhyming,
  And it reasons thus with me:
"Fool, why wilt thou still be prating?
Truth that's known needs no debating!"
  Therefore I nor song nor sonnet
  Write, Eliza dear, to thee!

It was the fashion in those days to celebrate Edinburgh weddings in the evening, and at seven o'clock on April 19, Mr Glover united John Stuart Blackie and Eliza Wyld in the bonds of holy matrimony. A large party was assembled to honour the occasion, and amongst them were the bridegroom's friends, Mr Theodore Martin, Sir William Hamilton, Lord Cunninghame, Mr Robert Horn, and Dr John Brown. The minister of Banchory was not able to be present, but Mr Andrew Jamieson filled the post of "best man," and the bride was attended by three bridemaidens, her special friends. After the rites, the two made man and wife left the company and drove to Midcalder, about eleven miles from Edinburgh. There had been much cogitation about the "jaunt," which had to be accomplished in ten days; for on the last day of April they were due in Aberdeen, in time for certain summer labours which began with May. So a few days at Midcalder and at Peebles fulfilled the term of their honeymoon, but they were days of peace after struggle. Joy quickened the beat of John Blackie's poetic pulse, and we owe to these days at Peebles two of his best and best-known poems. One is the "Benedicite," beginning—

Angels holy,
  High and lowly,
Sing the praises of the Lord!
  Earth and sky, all living nature,
  Man, the stamp of thy Creator,
Praise ye, praise ye, God the Lord!

This beautiful hymn has been since included in many Hymnals, and notably in that of the Jewish Church. It was metrically arranged to be sung to the German air of "Alles Schweige."

The other song is even better known. Walking one day along the river-path which skirts the Tweed between the bridge and Neidpath Castle, he gave utterance to a natural expression of strong Scottish feeling in the song of "Jenny Geddes"—"the valiant Jenny Geddes, that flung the three-legged stool." At this time he had not studied the Hundred Years' War of the Scottish Church, nor was he acquainted with more than its popular history. The incidents in high relief upon that gallant record were, however, in strong accord with his enthusiasm for the "poetry of conduct," and the courage, combativeness, self-assertion, and heroism which marked the Scottish resistance, found each an echo in his character The song took shape accordingly, and when his instinctive impressions were confirmed by a full acquaintance with the history of the period, it lay ready to hand as a rally to the flag of the Scottish Church, when in after-days the tide of southern fashion, setting northwards with Episcopalianism on its crest, rippled into every nook and corner of his country.

Professor and Mrs Blackie went by coach to Aberdeen at the end of April, and set agoing their home-life in the little house in Dee Street. Here they found awaiting them a delightful letter from Baron Bunsen, wishing them "Heil! Heil! Heil!"

The Professor began his summer class at once, and this too was the earnest of a movement which it took thirty years to make practical throughout both England and Scotland, and fifty years to guide to its natural and logical issue. In his class-room in Marischal College assembled

about a dozen ladies—amongst them his young wife—on the morning of May 1, to receive lessons in the German language. It was a new thing for the ladies of Aberdeen to receive instruction from a Professor, and the lessons went on briskly till the end of June.

Early in July the Professor and his wife abandoned work for rest, and went to Banchory-Ternan, where they spent three months in a cottage shared by his father and mother. They had hoped to go farther afield, but their finances were under heavy embargo for the first few years. There were expenses for furniture, for books; there was interest to be paid to Aunt Menie for some hundreds of pounds; the young wife had condemned her husband's casually assorted wardrobe, and had insisted upon its reconstitution: her talent for domestic economy, notable and helpful as it was to prove, needed a starting-point of indispensable expenditure. Besides, the Professor's objection to the cramped limits of the house in Dee Street was waxing imperious. She was aware of an imminent flitting, and it had to be reckoned with in her balance-sheet. So the summer months passed quietly in the little village of Banchory-Ternan, and the companionship of Mr Anderson made them memorable.

CHAPTER X.

ABERDEEN AND UNIVERSITY REFORM.

1842–1850.

DURING the first year of his work in Aberdeen, Professor Blackie's public and private engagements interrupted the flow of his contributions to magazine literature. But after marriage he returned to this field of labour, and during his leisure hours in the following winter he prepared a review of Klopstock's collected works, which appeared in the 'Foreign Quarterly Review' for January 1843; and an article on Professor Steffens's personal memoirs of the German movement against Napoleon, for the April number of the same Review.

Before the session began he made a second effort to secure his full professorial fees, and gained a partial victory over the grudging Senate. He secured a fee of two guineas from each student of the second class for three hours' teaching. This raised his full salary to about £350, a sum which—when mulcted of the interest due to Miss Stodart, of the payments expected from Scotch Professors to public and ceremonious demands, of the money spent on essential books—left a mere sufficiency for current needs and private charities. But Mrs Blackie brought to the management of

this small income a singular gift for wise economy; and wholesome food, books, and warmth were always forthcoming, although these excluded every amenity of home embellishment for some years. It was a trial to her fine taste to endure the horse-hair chairs and sofas which meagrely furnished their little parlours; but her hand had the magic touch which gives grace, and these stiff essentials, anew distributed, grew pliant and comfortable at her desire. She sped from room to room, pouncing upon disorder and making home fair and friendly to the eye, with such swift movement and sure hand that her husband called her "Oke," the swift one, and the name clung to her always.

When the session was over, they moved from Dee Street in New Aberdeen to High Street, close to the Town-hall of Old Aberdeen. Here, for £30 a-year, they got a charming house, one of its sitting-rooms thirty feet long, in which the Professor could march from end to end, while he rolled out the lines of strophe and antistrophe from "Agamemnon" or "The Eumenides." They were here in closer social touch with their circle of friends who lived in Old Aberdeen. The courtesies of the academical world were solemn, and they were relieved to live amongst friendly folks, whose incomes were small like their own, and whose kindliness adorned their hospitalities. The Gerards, Principal and Mrs Jack, Dr and Mrs Forbes, the Buchans, Professor and Mrs Gregory, and many maiden ladies old and young, who lived in pleasant little homes, and suggested to the Professor the title of *Parthenopolis* for Old Aberdeen, welcomed him and Mrs Blackie to their quarter. They were both great favourites in the City of Spinsters, where there were many tea-drinkings and junketings, cheery and informal.

But in spite of this change for the better, a fit of the

old dejection seems to have lured John Blackie into its depths about the very time that the flitting was accomplished. Perhaps he was overworked, and the strain of his gallant fight against prejudice and stupidity was beginning to tell. Unhappily, too, some book of Unitarian sermons had drifted into the current of his life, and he had thought fit to read them. They set in motion that flickering pulse of unbelief which beats intermittently in every serious mind. He began to waste his strength once more in vain questionings, letting his faith ebb. More was due to physical exhaustion than to mental change. He was worn out with the duties of the session, which he supplemented with such strenuous undertakings at home. Besides, the government of his class was always a serious difficulty. It was most distasteful to him to pose as a stern taskmaster, and by fines and impositions to secure respect from youths whom he would gladly have greeted as fellow-students, and the disorder, over which the pedagogue and not the man prevailed, discouraged him daily. As he never bent to the storm, it was not wonderful that the spring should have found him worn out. Besides, he was subject to a recurrent ailment at that season which must of itself have reduced his strength.

There is no doubt that he reviewed his position under the influence of these conditions, and fell into sore distress. It seemed to him that he must give up the Humanity Chair, become perilous to one at variance not only with the Calvinism which overshadowed it, but with the fundamental doctrine of Christianity. He wrote to Mr Anderson of Banchory for advice, and in the meantime was withdrawn into silence and depression. His wife sought in vain to comfort him. The problem, which he believed to be mental,—but which was no more than a mood, transient as the physical weakness which induced it,—was not to be

solved by wifely solicitude. Early in May Mr Anderson's letter arrived.

To me it appears [he wrote] that you look at Calvinism entirely on the side of its "eternal decrees." Now I think you cannot get rid of these doctrines even as a Rationalist—at least I never could. They are universals which enter into every system; and I do most seriously assure you, after some consideration and practical acquaintance with their tenets, that Unitarianism, objectively, is far more untenable, and, subjectively, far more heartless and cold. I know not a more forced and unnatural system, when considered as connected with a belief in a supernatural revelation. That you should be inclined to universalism I do not wonder; and that you should be yet without belief in a positive revelation in Christianity, knowing your natural tendency and historical development, though I regret, I can admit; but that you will long be captivated with the quagmires and bogs of Unitarianism *I do not believe.* Consider, my dear sir, you have but heard one of their ministers, and have not seen the cold-hearted piety their religion begets. Think also that the irksomeness you feel at not being free to express all your opinions, though quite free to think and form them, is a part of the discipline of Providence. Reflect also that your spiritual life and faculties are but in progress of development, and sure I am, if you will wait twelve months, the objective will be seen differently, the subjective being different. I highly respect your feelings, and deeply sympathise with you. These oaths and tests are abominable things, and the history of them, when written, will reveal a tissue of iniquitous cruelties. Tholuck said to me once that "when the man became a perfect Christian he outgrew ordinances." I thought of Milton. But, for example and for sympathy, attendance on public worship is a duty to many to whom it would not be otherwise.

This wise friend presented the difficulty in a new light, as one to be solved by no miraculous interposition, far less by rash action, but by patient waiting for the truth to which the honest mind attains in time. John Blackie cast off once and for ever the gloom which had beset him. He unfurled the flag under which his lifelong work was done, the flag which bore this scroll, "Trust in the Lord, and be thou doing good." By the month of July he was

able to say: "What I want are three things—1st, a great cause; 2d, a great battle; 3d, a great victory."

During the months of June, July, and August, Mrs Blackie was in Edinburgh and at Gilston. Her health had given way; the cold spring had brought bronchitis and a touch of pneumonia. Her husband found her much better, when he joined her in August, after a strenuous summer session occupied with German classes and reviews for the magazines. Debts pressed sorely upon him, and he cleared off a fair proportion by this work.

Incidents of the next few years are hard to disentangle from his correspondence, which is occupied more with the subjects engrossing his mind than with details which can be chronicled. But that correspondence was with men known and still remembered. Thus Mr R. H. Horne, the author of 'Orion,' warned him against publishing poetry for profit, and this letter indicates that in 1844 he already contemplated the issue both of 'Æschylus' and of original verses. On the other hand, Mr Macdonald of Rammerscales, an ardent and accomplished classic, encouraged him in the matter of 'Æschylus,' as did Mr Theodore Martin, from whose letter we may quote:—

I am right glad to find you at work again in this field. I have always thought it the true one for you, and cheerfully would I undertake to read your MS. and give you any suggestions if you would trust me with the duty. You are right in avoiding rhyme in the choruses; but you must be full of a true lyrical inspiration to hit those subtle rhythmical melodies which must come in their place. Popularity is not so much out of the question as you think. Give the world a fine English version of 'Æschylus,' and there is a large enough English public who will buy to make it pay.

He made a tour of the better known schools in Edinburgh and Glasgow during May 1844, and combined with this a first visit to Ayr and the country of Burns. In the

session 1844-45 he re-matriculated as a semi, and attended lectures to complete his undergraduate course, interrupted twice in his youth. His senior students were his fellows at Professor Macgillivray's class of Natural History, and in the succeeding sessions he followed the Natural Philosophy and Moral Philosophy courses as a tertian and a magistrand.

During the summer of 1845, while Mrs Blackie was at Peebles with Mr and Mrs Stodart, he remained busy in Aberdeen until August, when he started on a walking tour expressly planned to visit the Roman stations and camps, for a lecture on "The Romans in Scotland," with which he proposed to start the next session of work. He had furnished himself with many maps and books to further his researches. At Fettercairn, resting in the post-office, he drew these out of his coat-pockets. "You'll be in the book-line?" asked the worthy postmaster, and what answer could he give but that he was?

His father had retired from banking and left Aberdeen. He was then at Darnick near Melrose, and Professor Blackie joined him there in September, and after a month's peregrination in the valley of the Tweed, he went to Gilston with his wife.

The Test Acts engaged his public utterances in the autumn of this year. Opposition was made to Sir David Brewster's election as Principal of St Andrews because he adhered to the Free Church party. This roused the Professor's indignation, and he wrote an energetic pamphlet upon "Subscription to Articles," which gave to the general movement for the abolition of University Tests a considerable propulsion.

A high degree of impatience with clerical influence on education is visible in his attitude at this time, and a strong bias in favour of secular schools. His first pam-

phlet on the whole question of education in Scotland belongs to this year, 1845. It was an address to his students, and was a Latin composition with a short English preface. It reprobated the exclusion from the great centres of learning of all such subjects as could help to make men more capable of the practical work to which they were called at the close of their student days. Alike in the English and the Scotch Universities, modern languages, historical research, and the sciences were either condemned to a position inferior to the Latin and Greek languages, or wholly ignored, while these languages, so supremely valued, were pedantically taught, and inspired few to use the treasures of history, poetry, and philosophy to which they gave admission.

This Latin address was followed in 1846 by a pamphlet in English embodying his experience in Marischal College. It protested forcibly against filling the University benches with boys ignorant almost of the alphabets of Greek and Latin, and needing the drudgery of schoolmastering. It was a mockery for Scotland to regard herself as the best-educated country of the kingdom when the grammar-schools failed to furnish boys with even the rudiments of ancient geography, and when the letters of the Greek alphabet were the whole equipment with which their scholars were sent up to the Greek class-rooms of the Universities. Here and there in Scotland the rectors of the grammar-schools were men of classical attainment. We hear of teachers whose scholars were fired by their enthusiasm to follow them not only along the beaten highroad, but into the bypaths and recesses of Latin literature; but such were few, and notable in their place and day. The general standard was low, and custom had led the public to regard the Universities as the proper field for classics, so that boys of fifteen years, and sometimes less, scrambled

out of school into college in every stage, from crass to comparative ignorance. The pamphlet demanded for all the classes in the University curriculum an entrance examination by no means stringent, but at the least insisting upon some definite elementary knowledge which should stimulate the teaching in schools, and afford to the teaching in Universities ground upon which to erect its legitimate superstructure.

In Marischal College several Professors, and particularly Dr Cruikshank, Professor of Mathematics, had already established a slight examination for students entering the Humanity classes, and these gentlemen were stimulated by this pamphlet to create similar examinations for Greek, Mathematics, and Natural Philosophy.

The pamphlet received a still wider acknowledgment. Dr Chalmers, who had for thirty years raised his voice in protest against the degradation of University teaching, wrote to its author in full sympathy:—

> To the Universities there should remain the high function of elevating the Literature and Science of our land purely for their own sakes, and apart from their subserviency to any merely professional object. What a glorious country it would make if, for the expense of some £10,000 or £20,000 a-year more, we could get the Universities placed in those higher regions of philosophy and taste where they might contribute to the indefinite elevation of our national authorship in every department! I rejoice in your having advocated a high system of preliminary scholarship that might enable us all to take up higher positions in our respective territories.

Lord Cockburn endorsed the pamphlet with characteristic vigour:—

> The true way to feed our colleges is to educate the people generally. Hence the incalculable importance of the approaching move about the parish schoolmaster. If salaries are to be raised without introducing a system for raising the style of education, we only aggravate the drone-age of the drones we already have. The priests

play the devil with everything of the kind. Education will be right exactly in proportion as secular sense and vigour are allowed to supersede clerical ignorance and intolerance. Go on repeating the appeals. It is only by repetition of blows that such arguments succeed. It is not by stamping—a solitary stroke—but by engraving—a thousand touches—that the public mind is impressed.

These extracts are sufficient to show how hearty a God-speed Professor Blackie received from men qualified to judge of his campaign. But from within the Universities hardly a single voice of encouragement was heard. To infringe upon the *status quo* of bodies triply guarded by age, wont, and academical infallibility was quixotic. And yet he meant to dare the adventure. They had ceased to be the centres of such culture as was needed in Scotland, if she were to maintain her ground as a self-educating nation. They neither supplied professional needs nor the training demanded for commercial and agricultural progress. Their various schools were retrograde; only medicine advanced with the age, and admitted growth in all its departments commensurate with their development abroad. In their Divinity schools there was neither research nor criticism, but a mere empiric course of tuition. While in Germany colleges existed for full training and research in every branch of science applicable to industry and agriculture, there was no equivalent in our iron-bound institutions. And the classics which they purported to bestow were so hindered and handicapped by freedom of access, that it was ridiculous to expect such scholarship from Edinburgh and Aberdeen as Oxford could produce, thanks specially to her system of entrance examinations.

In Aberdeen, too, the matter was aggravated by disunion between the Colleges. Marischal and King's Colleges stood within a mile of each other, and yet at that time they united for no purpose whatever. Their Chairs were

shabbily endowed, and each had its counterpart in the other College. Both Professors and students suffered from the disunion, and yet the Colleges eyed each other with disfavour. By union and co-operation the results would have doubled, as they learnt twelve years later, but they had become dotard with vested interests, and impotent to make larger endeavour.

In 1848 Professor Blackie returned to the campaign. Early in that year he addressed to the 'Scotsman' newspaper a series of eight letters embodying not only the disabilities of the Scottish Universities when compared with those of Germany, but suggesting a plan of reform which—by entrance examinations, enlarged curriculum, elevation of the treatment of subjects, union of Colleges where it was clearly in the interest of education, emancipation from clerical dictation, and freedom from tests—should raise their entire standard. In these letters he appealed to all interested in Scottish education to demand its reform.

His gauntlet was taken up by Professor Pillans, the occupant of the Humanity Chair in the University of Edinburgh. He published a pamphlet whose chief argument against such reforms was that they would diminish the numbers in the University classes, and the fees correspondingly. His pamphlet made ingenious admission of the low state of learning, but regarded it as a condition so hard and fast that it had to be reckoned with as beyond remedy. He felt it to be chiefly important that no attempt should be made to remedy it. He was patriotically indignant that Professor Blackie should discover matter for emulation in the German Universities, and he made the mistake of classing the English with the Scottish Universities in their want of entrance examinations. This answer to Professor Blackie's challenge came from an important centre, although the knight appeared on the

field with holes in his armour at which the champion of reform was quick to point his steel.

Professor Blackie published his eight articles in pamphlet form, prefaced by a letter which drew attention to the errors in fact and to the flimsiness in argument which characterised the Edinburgh Professor's utterance. This pamphlet was widely read. There had already been many deliverances on the state of education in Scotland. Lord Brougham, Dr Chalmers, the editor of the 'Scottish Guardian,' and others, had loudly proclaimed its need of reform; practical teachers of special subjects had tried to call attention to their particular disabilities; and now the most resonant of these voices, if not yet the most influential, iterated and reiterated its appeal, demanding a herculean task, which the slow processes of Commission have barely effected in fifty years. His voice revived the clamour for reform, with its inseparable counter-clamour of resistance. Something fresh and emphatic gave a new authority to his summons, which roused not only the vigorous adhesion of all who recognised its sense, but also the irritated attention of those who, crystallised in the threatened system, detested the clanging which disturbed their repose.

Professor Blackie's name was now associated with reform of a definite character. In his eight letters he had sketched a scheme which affected nearly every point in question, and he received letters of warm encouragement from educationists at home and abroad. The subject made constant demands on his time and attention during these years.

But in spite of this preoccupation he found leisure in the summer of 1846 to finish his translation of "The Persians" and of "Agamemnon," and in the following summer he completed his 'Æschylus.' His faculty for work grew with its employment: it is impossible to give in detail all that he accomplished in fields of labour outside

his main subjects. He acted up to such inspiring sooth-words as the following, taken from the German in July 1846:—

> "Dare a great thing. The thing thou triest
> Lifts thy straining mind;
> Though thou mayst not reach the highest,
> Something high thou'lt find."

In the spring of 1847 he was in Edinburgh, giving at the Philosophical Institution a course of six lectures upon his "great cause," education. They received much attention, and he found himself lionised by the Modern Athenians. He was glad to believe that his lectures had begun the agitation of the public mind on the question of educational reform. "To be called on," he wrote, "to break down a mountain with a pocket-hammer,—this is my Aberdeen task; here I get gunpowder."

In 1847, early in August, he started by himself on his first Highland tour. He traversed Hugh Miller's country, and visited Dingwall, Inverness, Fort William, Ballachulish, and Oban. From the little inn at Ballachulish he climbed Ben Nevis, walked to the head of Glenroy and back again, and explored Glencoe. His adventures filled constant letters to his wife, who was at Gilston. When he and some fellow-pedestrians from the inn had climbed up about 3000 feet of Ben Nevis, a sudden curtain of mist surrounded them, becoming thicker as they cautiously crept upwards, and hiding the wonderful view. But they made out the summit, and pledged each other from their flasks and toasted their absent wives, and so descended thwarted but undismayed. Indeed his cheerful spirit conceived of the mist as a benefit. "I am convinced that, for a truly sublime effect on the imagination, we were much the better of the mist."

This walking tour had been undertaken as much for the

benefit of his health as for the sake of the Western Highlands. The pressure of work had brought back the ailments of his Göttingen days, and he had recourse to the remedy which then removed them. He returned to Gilston recovered in health, and full of the exceeding charm of the country which he had visited—a charm of nature at her grandest, but so arrayed in light and colour, so varied, so fresh and magnetic, that the spell which it laid upon him was never broken. In those days no crowds of tourists invaded the glens and steamed up the lochs; the land was innocent of hotels; the bay of Oban was encircled by a row of white houses; everywhere the breezy heights were purple with heather, or green with larch and oak, not dull with villa lodgings and hideous hydropathics. At Port Appin, on his way back, his luggage was sent ashore by mistake, and he was obliged to follow it, as it held the MS. of his translation of 'Æschylus,' and so he wasted a day which had been destined for Staffa.

The end of April and part of May in 1848 were devoted to a course of lectures on "Ancient Rome," given in Edinburgh at the Philosophical Institution on Tuesdays and Fridays, and in Glasgow on Mondays and Thursdays. They were attended by crowded audiences, and many old friends mustered on the benches—Robert Horn, William Aytoun, Dr John Brown, and others; while on one occasion the chair was filled by Christopher North himself. But the effort was too great, and he returned to Aberdeen suffering from severe headaches, which continued throughout the summer.

Towards the end of May he and Mrs Blackie went to London. His sister Helen had married Mr Kennedy, an excellent Congregational minister, and was settled in Stepney, Mr George Stodart lived in Russell Square, and they stayed some time with these relatives. The Professor

called on Mr and Mrs Carlyle at Chelsea, and made the acquaintance of Dr John Carlyle, the well-known student of Dante, who was staying with his brother. He described an evening with "the Prophet" in a letter to Miss Augusta Wyld:—

Thomas Carlyle is really a notable monster, and to be respected for the many noble thoughts he has elaborated and for the words of wisdom which he has flung abroad to bear divine fruit among foolish-hearted men; but I can't help thinking, face to face in a small parlour he is rather terrible, and I fancy prophets are best exhibited in the pulpit, or in the wilderness. A few grand moral instincts burn so intensely in the hearts of these men that they have no room for anything else: they rush out from their smoking sanctuary with a flaming sword in their hand, and whoever follows them not and fights is accounted a heretic. Scottish and English Universities, British Houses of Parliament, orthodox theologies, railroads, and free trade, were all shaken out and sifted under the category of Sham; while Oliver Cromwell and his Ironsides, and the old Covenanters who sang psalms and handled pikes on Dunse Moor, were held up to admiration as the only heroes in this country for the last two hundred years.

Amongst the many new acquaintances whom this stay in London procured for him were Dr Thirlwall and Professor Newman, the latter of whom was much to his mind:—

He is a thorough scholar, but not in the least infected with the vulgar English idolatry of deifying the past and depreciating the present. On the contrary, he takes a living interest in the politics of the present day, and shows that he considers learning as valuable only in so far as it can be made to bear on the grand interests of a progressive humanity. He is a slender man with a pale face, but looking clearness, and kindness, and sincerity.

The Chartist Riots were in full swing during the month of June that year, and Mrs Blackie was unable to accompany her husband on his wanderings throughout the Metropolis. He left her in her uncle's care about the middle of the month, and paid visits to Leicester, Lutterworth,

and Oxford. He broke the journey to Lutterworth by a walk to Naseby, leaving the coach about three miles from the battle-field, to which he was guided by a village lad, who explained the cause of the battle: "The parties couldn't agree about a new kind of Methodism, and fell a-fighting."

From Oxford he wrote to his wife, fixing a day for her journey thither, and she joined him on June 29. They lived in lodgings in High Street, their landlord being head cook at Merton. He was a grave personage, with a soul above saucepans. He disapproved of the feasts and junketings of Commemoration Week, which was celebrated during their stay. "These 'ere 'alls," said he, "are 'alls of larnin', and should behave as such." As they did not share his prejudice, and had introductions to many of the University dons, their days were filled with gaieties, and the time-honoured hospitalities of Oxford were lavishly extended to them.

The Professor was delighted with the beauty of the University buildings. He wrote:—

> The uncommon succession of hoary, time-battered towers and turrets gives something very solemn and almost sacred to the streets of this place.

And he added:—

> One can hardly be surprised to find Toryism of all kinds, political and ecclesiastical, so prosperous here: the real wonder is, that Puseyism should be of such modern growth in such a place, and that all are not Papists.

In Oxford he made many acquaintances—Mr Jowett, then Fellow of Balliol, and the Rev. A. P. Stanley being amongst the most distinguished. The visit lasted all July. But it did not serve to rid him of the depressing headaches from which he suffered; nor did it serve to rid him

of a rooted prejudice against Oxford methods and results. To Oxford, Professor Blackie refused justice then and always; and it must be conceded that whatever ground there was for his animadversions, he failed to state them in a manner which could either conciliate Oxford or convince outsiders of their worth. The graver manners, the reserve, the social etiquette, the courtesies of debate, the overstrained propriety, vexed his more aggressive nature, turned his sportive attacks into affronts, and maimed his spontaneity. He seldom appeared to advantage in Oxford, although he was always welcomed there with a hospitality most honouring to the University.

This year, 1848, was signalised by a final and successful effort to bring the fees of the Humanity classes up to the general standard of Marischal College. They were raised to three guineas for each student of the first class, and the hours were increased to twelve weekly, while attendance at the second class was made optional.

In spite of a summer full of varied experiences, he returned to the work of a new session feeling far from well, the nervous exhaustion of too much work making him a prey to headache and to other ailments. These increased as the session progressed, and he was compelled to give up teaching for several months. These fallow months were a sore trial to his impatient spirit, but they were absolutely necessary. Early in 1849 he began to revise and correct his translation of 'Æschylus,' and to plan for its publication. Mr Carlyle heard of his project, and wrote to him on April 16, 1849:—

You are engaged on 'Æschylus,' they tell me—which, beyond doubt, is a good book to try. A Body of Greek Literature (small rigorously selected body), Body of Greek Dramatists first of all, is what the world now emphatically demands of the Scholar-Guild, which it has kept up this long time "regardless of expense," and I

must say with intrinsically and somewhat astonishing result hitherto! For what we wanted was not learned battlement about Greek Heroes and Myths, but wise speech, melodious by its depth and truth about British Heroes and Facts; — good Heavens! it is strange that men ever could have forgotten this! However, we do expect now, as I say, a kind of real Heathen Greek Bible (or set of select small books we can read) from our expensive Professors of Classicality,—terribly expensive if we compute *all* they have cost us!—and for this object I think they will never get a better model than the Divine Hebrew Bible, and the singularly successful method hit upon for "translating" this — for carrying this over to us and making it ours.

In May Mrs Blackie took the sceptre into her own hands, and made plans for her invalided husband for the first time since their marriage. A hydropathic house had been opened at Dunoon by Dr East, which was not a mere cheap hotel, but a practical water-cure establishment. Mrs Blackie inclined to try the new cure upon the Professor, and he, willing to be set upon his feet again by whatever remedy, yielded to her wish. They spent May and June at Dunoon with Dr East, and before six weeks were over, the patient was not merely cured, but was climbing every mountain in the neighbourhood, and singing on their tops a pæan to the Doctor, which resolved itself at last into a prose pamphlet on his treatment. He sent a copy of this to Mr Carlyle, and it was thus acknowledged:—

Many thanks for your friendly remembrance of me at the Water-cure Establishment. I have often thought of that adventure; and believe it might really alleviate and almost free me for a time. But for a *cure*;—alas! that lies beyond the reach of Æsculapian or other aid, and will never be my portion in this lower world! The inner man is too tumultuous for the outer (who is but a lean fellow, as you may see); there, once for all, lies the fact, and no Doctor of Medicine, but only Medea with her renovating kettle (if that terrible process were worth while, at this advanced stage of the business), could make a change therein. Happy he

who is not lean, if not stupid; next happy he who is of *feline* fibre, more or less, and can content himself with the inevitable.

Later in the year Mr Carlyle, continuing to be interested in the translation of 'Æschylus,' took considerable trouble to find the right publisher for this canonical book of the "Heathen Bible." He selected G. W. Parker, West Strand, who agreed to publish it at the translator's own expense, as he had already lost considerably by undertaking to launch translations from the Greek. The sum required for its publication was £160, and at first there seemed little hope of providing so much. But Mrs Blackie came to the rescue with a courageous proposal. She had weighed the expense of housekeeping against that of living in lodgings, and suggested that they should sell their furniture, give up the house in the High Street, and live during the session in lodgings near Marischal College. By going to visit friends in summer they might pay for 'Æschylus' at the end of two years. Her plan was adopted, and the horsehair furniture went to the hammer. It may be suspected that she bore its loss with equanimity.

Lodgings were taken in a house in Union Street,—just two rooms, to make the economy thorough. The Professors of Marischal College were scandalised at the indignity, and forbore to visit their colleague. But the friends in Old Aberdeen, who were admitted to confidence, tempered the cold wind of academical dudgeon by constant visits. The manuscript of 'Æschylus' was placed in Parker's hands, and by June it was issued.

Letters from Mr Carlyle, Professor Newman, Leigh Hunt, Arthur Clough, "Orion," and many other qualified judges, poured in upon the translator during the year. Perhaps quotations from Leigh Hunt's letters will have the charm of rarity:—

I have read with great interest and refreshment the "Prolegomena," full of musical matters of which I am fond, and to which there is a wonderful dearth of attention amongst almost all English poets,—those counted most musical not excepted,—and am now full-tilt, or rather full-tumbling, amidst those billows of song which you have set rolling, and foaming, and harmoniously conflicting, and disclosing their almost too dazzling treasures of expression and imagery, after right Æschylean mode;—certainly no "waveless sea" beneath a "windless air."

And later he wrote:—

With the exception of some condescensions to conventional helps of phraseology, chiefly in the rhymed passages, I should say that your version is right masculine and Æschylean, strong, musical, conscious of the atmosphere of mystery and terror which it breathes in, and in all respects deeply feeling. I admire the just and impassioned prominence which your learning and love of music combined have enabled you to give to the lyrical nature of these fine, Cassandra-voiced, ringing old dramas; though I could not but think sometimes of Butler's verses about the gods chancing to

"Have piques
Against an ancient family of Greeks,
That other men may tremble and take warning
How such a fatal progeny they're born in."

Mr Carlyle was equally eulogistic of the blank-verse translation, but, unlike Leigh Hunt, protested against the rhythmic choruses, of which he wrote:—

I have also dipped here and there into the rhythmic matter; find it spirited and lively to a high degree, and indeed replete with ingenuity and talent;—the grimmer is my protest against your having gone into song at all with the business.

The rhymes which he abhorred were not attempted in the first cast. They were due to Professor Aytoun's advice. Supping with the Jacobite poet one evening, Professor Blackie had read a couple of the dramas to him, and had invited his criticism. He urged him to alter the blank-verse choruses into rhyme, and, except in "Prometheus Bound," his opinion prevailed.

CHAPTER XI.

'ÆSCHYLUS' AND THE GREEK CHAIR.

1850–1852.

'ÆSCHYLUS,' begun in 1838, had taken twelve years to transmute into English, but only the first three and the last three of those years were specially devoted to the work. It was dedicated to Chevalier Bunsen and Professor Gerhard. The translator likened his labour to that of Medea with her "renovating kettle," "who, having cut a live body to pieces, engaged to produce it again reinvigorated in all its completeness."

In translating 'Faust,' he had aimed at a "recasting" rather than at a "transposing" of the original. So his aim in translating 'Æschylus' was, in Southey's words, "faithfully to represent the matter, manner, and spirit of the original," rather than to offer "in the guise of the English language an image of Æschylus in every minute verbal feature." He desired that his version of the great dramas should do Æschylus justice in so far that the reader should be satisfied that their author was a man of genius, essentially Greek, imbued with lofty conceptions of the divine sovereignty of Zeus, of the immortal influence of human action, of the impossibility of escape

from the barriers within which man's lot is cast,—those barriers of human relationship and divine limitation which are imposed on all. And he sought to do this through the medium of a language unsuited to express all that Greek meant when wielded by Æschylus,—unsuited to reproduce his tremendous phrases, his marvellous combinations, but sufficiently worthy to deprive the translator of all apology for failure. In the Preface he says:—

> If I have failed in these pages to bring out what is Greek and what is Æschylean prominently, in combination with force, grace, and clearness of English expression, it is for lack of skill in the workman, not for want of edge in the tool.

So far he surely attained, and farther; for he achieved some very beautiful renderings in rhymed verse of the more lyrical passages, whether inspired by the sentiment of wonder, of terror, of sympathy, or of grief. In "Prometheus Bound" he avoided rhyme, the grandeur of its heroic antitheses—Prometheus paying the mighty penalty of his beneficence, Io doomed to suffering for reasons which her will had not conditioned—making rhyme inadequate to their proportions. But in every other play, rhyme "corresponding or analogous" to the lyric metre of Æschylus is used, and where it cannot follow the measure of the original, the language employed is called upon to convey its emotional character.

The most scholarly critic of the time, Mr Conington, gave his opinion in the 'Edinburgh Review' of July 1850. He rendered justice to the Professor's adherence more to the Æschylean manner and spirit than to absolute verbal precision, and admitted his great advance upon earlier translators. He spoke of the scholarship as "remarkably good," and of the introduction and notes "as a real acquisition to our means of studying the Greek Drama," and he praised the vigour and significance of the

rendering. At the same time, he took exception to the licence of explanatory comment incorporated in the text of translation, and to the coupling a choice of renderings, which he stigmatised as "hedging." The translator, he held, was bound to choose one of the two possible renderings and abide by it, except in passages where great ingenuity in his selection of words might enable him to shadow forth or suggest both meanings.

Another friend expressed his wish that the Professor would publish original rather than translated poetry—"for," said he, "you have not grammar enough to be a good translator"; on which came the comment, "No, indeed; I hate grammar, logic, rhetoric, law, and all such dry formalisms."

From the very first year of Professor Blackie's residence in Aberdeen he had assembled at his own house small parties of his most promising students for the purpose of reading and discussing the classics. At these gatherings, informal in their earlier stage, they conned and cogitated Cicero, Horace, and Virgil; but about 1848 the Professor bethought him that, having victoriously grappled with Latin, they might try conclusions with Greek. The new Society, loosely organised at first and called the "Homeric Club," was formally enrolled as "The Hellenic Society" in January 1850. Its inaugural meeting took place in Mr Forbes White's house, and initiated the habit of assembling at the homes in turn of such members as were householders. On this first occasion some ten students met the Professor, and it is interesting to record the future eminence of four of their number—Mr Donaldson, now Principal of St Andrews; Mr Geddes, Principal of Aberdeen; Mr Davidson, Professor of Hebrew in the Edinburgh Free Church College; and Mr Sachs, Free Church Professor of Hebrew in Aberdeen. These gentlemen were all students

of the Humanity Class, and those surviving, as in the cases of Mr Forbes White and Mr Charles Robertson, have maintained the scholarship which they learned to appreciate in those days. They began their labours with Homer. When the Society was transplanted to Edinburgh its numbers increased, many notable scholars becoming members, and it passed into a phase which admitted of conviviality as well as of serious study. But in the primitive days, which are still under record, the "high thinking" was supported by "plain living," and bread, cheese, and ale were the simple ancestry of the stuffed turkey and champagne to which the law of evolution conducted the original supper. Even over bread and cheese the members were wont to relax into song and story, so that the toasts and speeches of later times had their due relation to humble types.

In July Professor Blackie went to Dunoon to seek Dr East's help after these engrossing labours, and soon reported himself refreshed and ruddy-cheeked, and exploring Glen Massen and the Holy Loch.

A prayer which took shape on the hills one Sabbath morning expresses his relation to God and to life:—

O Thou, who not in temples made with hands
Hast made Thy dwelling,
Where the robed priest with pictured prayer-book stands
Thy praises telling;
Here in this rock-ribbed, moss-grown mountain nook,
While I implore Thee,
Hear me who pray without or priest or book
In fear before Thee.
O! if from Thy deep-seated central throne
Thy radiation
Lends to life's extreme crust and utmost zone
Rich animation,—
Shine, Lord, in me till my glad heart o'erbrim
With living fulness,
And drops—like lead from each quick-starting limb—
The earthly dulness!

Not more than man I ask, but as a man
Life's worth confessing,
I'd nobly use my little human span
With God's high blessing!

From Dunoon he made out a long intended visit to Arran, walking round its coast and climbing Goatfell, as well as visiting its schools and schoolmasters in furtherance of his educational research. One Sunday, being determined *not* to go to church, he sallied forth from his quarters bent on a long walk, but hardly got into marching order when he came upon a large open-air assembly gathered round the Rev. Dr Duncan, the learned Free Church Professor of Hebrew, who was

actually sitting beneath the north gable of a cottage, and conducting this rural worship. I had no objection to make myself a member of this church for the moment, so laid myself down on the green hillside and listened to the pious expounder for a period of not less than three hours! I cannot say I felt the least tired; because I lay at my ease gazing at the clear sea, the blue sky, and the green slopes of Holy Isle, and listening to the soft murmurous ripple of the ocean wave, and because when I fixed my regard on the gaunt, uncouth figure of the earnest Calvinist preacher, I found sufficient occupation for heart and imagination to prevent me from noting the time. Duncan is slow, heavy, and full of repetition; but he has noble, wingèd thoughts that flash forward from the prose of the great mass of his talk. I am glad that I heard him, and hope long to be benefited by the recollection of his serious truthfulness.

Early in August he was in Edinburgh, staying with his father and attending school examinations. He found himself lionised at these functions, for the fame of his 'Æschylus' was abroad. Reviews by George Henry Lewes and other scholars had supplemented the critical appreciation of Conington with larger praise, and many of the learned visitors, who were celebrating in Edinburgh the instructive junketings of the British Association, sought his acquaintance. Mrs Blackie was visiting her sister-in-

law, Mrs Ross, at Beverley, and in his letter to them the Professor retailed his impressions of these new acquaintances. In Arran he had revived his early interest in Geology, and finding his friend Edward Forbes in the Geological Section, he atttached himself more particularly to its proceedings, although he had been enlisted on the Committee of the Ethnological Section.

To see [he wrote] Edward Forbes, old M'Laren of the 'Scotsman,' John Longmuir of Aberdeen, and the Duke of Argyll standing on and preaching from the same geological pulpit is, in this country of aristocratic and ecclesiastical partitions, a pure delight. Then I admire the clearness, distinctness, tranquillity, and commanding certitude which displays itself in the best types of the English mind, and more particularly as exhibited in Sir Roderick Murchison, the President of the Geological Section. He was our captain yesterday, as we tramped in a band of forty or fifty up and round about the Calton Hill and Arthur's Seat, and every now and then, as anything peculiar in the rocky volume emerged, he stopped and gathered us round in a ring, and began a field-preaching. I admired very much the clear, direct, soldier-like manner in which he communicated the results of his European observations of many years within the compass of a few short sentences,—a perfect ideal of manly decision without the slightest tinge of dogmatism. Last night I was at one of Dr Gregory's evening parties, which are held every night during the Association. It was a strange mixture of all persons and parties. The Duke of Argyll was there, a notable well worth seeing; worth hearing too, I hope, as he is to read a paper on basaltic rocks in the Hebrides the first to-morrow morning. He is a very young man—about twenty-seven, I should think—of small make and stature, with the most beautiful golden hair and light-blue eyes, a fair, fresh, but delicate complexion, and a refined and intellectual expression. An Athenian professor to whom I was introduced is son-in-law to Skene of Rubislaw. He had his son with him in the beautiful Greek dress, and I spoke a good deal to them both in Modern Greek, and was perfectly well understood. He says I would learn to speak the language fluently in two months.

This gentleman was Professor Rangabè, and the acquaintance ripened later.

When the proceedings of the Association were at an

end he joined his wife at Beverley, and in October both returned to the Aberdeen lodgings for the winter.

The session began in November, and the Professor of Humanity initiated its work with a lecture upon the methods of learning languages written and delivered in Latin. It was printed with the motto, from Sir Thomas Browne's 'Religio Medici,' "Now Nature is not at variance with Art nor Art with Nature." This oration, in vigorous Latin, dealt with the rational as opposed to the pedantic method of teaching languages. He suggests the parallel from Nature, where, without other art than mother-wit devises, a child is taught by loving and playful repetition the language of his little world of nursery and home and family, and is furnished with a multitude of names and associations before he is expected to express by inflection their relations to each other, or the subtleties of time and manner which concern their actions. Just so should a beginner be furnished with a vocabulary of the language which he studies, ear and eye being called into service, and not until he is familiar with the names of things in the new world which he seeks to explore can he be called upon to cope with the niceties of their multiform conditions, whether active or passive. To further this later stage of research books are of the greatest importance; but their use must be living, and all that is read must be at once converted into material for speaking. It is better to *use* a small vocabulary than to construe eternally in unassimilated doses the whole literature of a language. Words once acquired must promptly be put to use, and for this purpose it is important to seek the society of those to whom the language is native, whether German, French, or Greek. But if this be impossible, literature must supplement the defect, and must be read aloud, committed to memory, and declaimed, altered, and readapted for exercise until both

the words and style of every author in turn have yielded their utmost of gain. The lecture more particularly censured the practice of making English the chief medium of teaching Latin in the classes of Scottish Universities, where—until the rational and scholarly use of the language by the Professor should at once accustom and encourage his class to its practice—it was hopeless to expect classical proficiency.

At the beginning of the session of 1851, Professor Blackie delivered a lecture in English which not only retraced the ground covered by his Latin oration, but opened up the whole question of the method of studying and teaching languages. Let man be taught to imitate God, who teaches in Nature, and whose methods alone are profitable. The "living process of Nature acting by divinely implanted instinct" is a model which no pedagogic machinery can excel, or even approach; and the boy will learn, as the infant does, by ear and eye at first, and just in measure as his environment yields favouring conditions to his imitative faculties. It is when the learner has passed into the further stage of developed intellect, with powers demanding strenuous employment of the material already acquired, that a systematic plan is needed. Then books, grammars, and pedantic accuracy are of worth, if they are supplemented with illustrations, objects, pictures of objects, bright commentaries from the teacher, and always with the extempore use of the language taught, whether in explanation or commentary. From this stage the student reaches the philology first of the particular language in hand, and finally of languages taken in groups, attaining to the comprehensive subject of Comparative Philology should his mental bent lead him to pursue the research. Coupled with these important suggestions, the Professor recommended special treatment in special cases,

and indicated the rational course to be taken when Latin and Greek dulled rather than stimulated the faculties of a boy.

Let the hopeless dunce of the grammar-school be tried with natural history, with geography, drawing, music, turning, fencing, and perhaps he will display the latent instinct which your portentous machinery of grammars and dictionaries has hitherto smothered.

The Greek and Humanity classes of the Scottish Universities should not be cumbered with such students, but their benches should be filled with youths wisely led through the earlier stages of instruction, students eighteen or nineteen years old, who have reached that point in their development when they begin to be susceptible to what is noble and beautiful in the thoughts and style of classical writers. Only when remodelled in some such way can the Universities of Scotland "send forth a race of scholars, thinkers, and theologians whom Europe shall respect."

This lecture embodied incidentally a notable allusion to the low social status to which men expected to be "profoundly versed in Homer and Demosthenes" are condemned in Scotland, by the inadequate salaries which they receive.

They are practically a proscribed race. Say what you please of your respect for education and educators, your respected pedagogue has only £100 or £200 a-year. In my opinion it requires talent of as high an order, and moral character much higher, to make a young man love learning, as to shoot a Sikh or to cut down a Caffre. But the world has hitherto been of a different opinion, and till it choose to alter this opinion, we must expect to find inferior teaching of languages, as of everything else, predominant in the schools. The only way to remedy this evil is to raise the £200 a-year to £500, and teaching will at once become a gentlemanly profession.

This lecture, printed in 1852, along with the Latin address of the foregoing session, is a remarkable forecast

of just those reforms which now engage the attention of teachers and educationists. Nearly half a century ago this Scotch Professor stated in clear terms the defects and futility of both pedagogic and academic methods in his country, and foreshadowed with precision the very changes in these which are now demanded. At that time he was almost the only man who raised his voice upon the two subjects of a reformed secondary education and of entrance examination for every University class; and incidentally to his treatment of these, he dealt the prevailing teaching of Prosody — casual and anomalous—a stroke which heralded his later persistent onslaught.

When the session of 1850-51 came to an end, Professor and Mrs Blackie carried out a plan which had taken some years to mature. Their summers had been spent up to that year in a desultory manner, and not always with a fresh result of stimulating experience. So long as they retained the house in Old Aberdeen, they were obliged to limit their excursions. Although the Professor's wanderings on foot were inexpensive, his wife, unequal to their fatigue, was usually relegated to the houses of his or her relatives for lengthy visits. But when 'Æschylus' was published and paid for, the economy of lodgings began to tell, and since these could be abandoned after the session's residence, they found themselves free to cross the Channel and make their way to Bonn. Mrs Blackie's youngest sister and her husband's half-brother George joined them. The Professor's aim was to study philology, to enlarge his acquaintance with the subject of education in Germany, and to seek the society of several Professors in Bonn with whom he had corresponded for some years. The little party found quarters with a delightful outlook on the Rhine. Their rooms had just been vacated by the Have-

locks, and they settled into them with the lively sense of expectation which attends a perfectly new experiment in housekeeping, when the environment is fresh and generates surprises. The ladies picked up German, attended coffee-parties, made acquaintance with the domesticated and sentimental housewives of Bonn, took excursions which these joined with contribution of sausage and salad, gathered lilies of the valley on the Seven Mountains, and ventilated their minds with a breezy inrush of local chronicle and tradition. They met the Chevalier Bunsen, who paid Bonn a visit during their stay, and this meeting made the whole summer significant to Mrs Blackie, who felt that high harmony of powers and motives which rendered him influential, and who recorded in later life the shyness which seized her at the first interview with her husband's "own ideal knight."

Firm friendship was sworn with Professors Brandes, Ritschl, and Bernays, and the quartette left the Rhine University town with sincere regret. Professor Blackie wished to make a tour of inspection in Saxony; so they made their way to Liebenstein late in July, and found a point of departure in that little Thuringian watering-place, where his wife and her sister might stay while he explored the world of Saxon gymnasia.

In Halle, Gotha, and Weimar he found enough to occupy him for a fortnight. He walked to Gotha from Liebenstein, taking the Inselsberg, Ruhla, and Eisenach on his way. From Gotha he tramped to Halle, where he lingered some days, welcomed by Dr Duncker and Professor Roediger, and hearing Tholuck both lecture and preach. From Halle he circled back to Liebenstein by Weimar. "I have seen to-day," he wrote, "Goethe's house and Schiller's house and Wieland's house and Herder's house, and all the Heiligthümer;" and he spent the following day

in digressing to Jena, where he interviewed a Greek professor "full of genius and character."

Liebenstein depressed him, its "endless idleness and aimless prattle" were antipathetic, and the party left for Holland, where the long holiday was brought to a close.

After their return to Aberdeen, the work of the new session, which included the remarkable lecture already reviewed, was interrupted by news of the death of Professor Dunbar, the occupant of the Greek chair in Edinburgh University. This took place on December 7, 1851. His retirement had for some time been expected, as he was old and ailing, but death antedated the step. This was the opportunity to which Professor Blackie had long had regard. His work in Greek was done as well from hope to seize this golden chance as from choice. "I wanted," he wrote in the "Notes," "to exchange Latin for Greek, copper for gold." To this end 'Æschylus' had been translated and published in self-denial, and now that the coveted chair was empty, it was not wonderful that he should be roused to the liveliest exertion.

The Greek chair was in the gift of the Lord Provost, Bailies, and members of the Town Council of Edinburgh. Mr Duncan M'Laren was Lord Provost at the time, and the Free Church and United Presbyterian Church were largely represented in the membership of the municipal body. Most of these gentlemen were respectable tradesmen, who honestly desired to choose the best man, and who in other appointments had shown their competence to do so. But it was difficult for them—their interests being embarked upon currents widely removed from that of classical culture and its claims in the realm of higher education—to decide upon the fitness of the numerous candidates who flooded their table with applications and with wave upon wave of testimonials. Besides, they were hampered by

sectarian prepossessions, still keen and bitter after the Disruption of 1843. Excellent and useful citizens as they were, they had their prejudices; and these were the prejudices of men to whom the decent externals of broadcloth and a rigorous observance of Presbyterian formulas, and preferably of U.P. or F.C. Presbyterianism, represented the whole duty of man. A very natural objection to genius was involved in these prejudices, and particularly to genius which eschewed the Sabbatic surtout, and which arrayed itself in checkered trousers and plaid.

The Professor's friends in Edinburgh banded themselves together in an informal committee to advise him upon every step of his application. A more generous, devoted, and honourable backing never sped the fortunes of any candidate. Dr Daniel Wilson, his brother Professor George Wilson, Dr Robert Lee, Mr Horn, Mr George Harvey,—afterwards President of the Royal Scottish Academy,—Mr Macara, Mr Knox, Mr Hunter of Craigcrook, and Mr Stodart, were some of the hardest workers on this committee; and to them quite as much as to the Professor's qualifications the final success was due. Other men contributed their quota of influence, but on those mentioned fell the heat and burden of the fray. For the number and distinction of the candidates, the prejudices and indecision of the patrons,—who were somewhat unwilling to be reasoned with by powerful special pleaders,—and the unanswerable disabilities of the Professor, who was a genius and figured accordingly in a costume abhorred of Town Councillors at that date, a costume rank of heresies and the very livery of frivolity, made the struggle hot and protracted.

The most powerful rival candidates were Mr Hannah, Rector of the Academy; Mr Bonamy Price of Rugby; Professor Macdouall of Queen's College, Belfast; and Dr W. Smith from the New College in London, whose reputation

was chiefly based upon his classical dictionaries. Nineteen applicants in all appeared on the field. Dr Smith and Professor Macdouall were the favourites of the Dissenting Town Councillors.

The Professor issued his first batch of testimonials, and made the initial mistake of forwarding them to the patrons without prepaying the postage. This oversight inevitably detracted from their impressiveness, and Professors Gerhard, Brandes, and Ritschl testified in vain. His next blunder was to come to Edinburgh at Christmas-time habited in the obnoxious shepherd's plaiding. He called on all the thirty-three Town Councillors, and dissipated his immediate chance of securing the promise of their votes. It must be conceded that his own manner was his worst enemy in the circumstances. Five minutes of jaunty, reckless discourse, an attack on the narrow-mindedness of the patron under appeal, a sudden shake of his shoulder and a shove, and a burst of laughter for farewell, were not reassuring to a civic dignitary perspiring with responsibility. They were not evidences of scholarship, although mayhap of genius, and only proved the eternal fitness of genius to starve. Besides, the legend of the Tests, whose true history had suffered change in a decade of years, shed a sinister lustre on his repute, and his aggressive defiance of sober inquiry fed the lurid flame.

In January his chance was almost gone. It required weeks of careful work on the part of his committee to nurse it back into existence. The workers knew his real value, and were most anxious to shield his candidature from his own assistance. They wrote letters of almost pathetic entreaty to deprecate his personal interference, to beseech him to remain quietly in Aberdeen, and on no account to repeat the blundering canvass of Christmas. Signs are not wanting that he longed for the fray, and

reduced his friends to despair by reiterated proposals to return, and it exercised all their ingenuity to achieve his submission to their better judgment.

Do not come up to Edinburgh till the election is over [wrote one]; it is a pity you came up last time,—some of the *tailor* electors were quite scandalised at your costume. If you do come just now, for any sake bring decent clothes with you. But your best policy is to stay in Aberdeen.

He was induced to stay in Aberdeen, whence he furnished the electors, and all his more influential friends, with copies of his testimonials, in full, in supplement, in abstract, and prepaid. In this he only adopted the policy of the other candidates. The Town Councillor who struggled through that literature, wave after wave of florid recommendation from nineteen different sources, must have lost his breath in the passage and lain panting on the farther side. But each had his helm by which to steer, and it is an honourable record for that Town Council that it preserved its independence in spite of a vortex of persuasive influences. Very slowly the prejudice against Professor Blackie was overcome. A new issue of his letters and pamphlets on the question of education did much to help the change. That he was a Scotchman already famous in two countries of Europe effected something; that he was not at hand to ruffle their susceptibilities worked for him. The men were thoroughly conscientious: if some were stupid, the greater number were anxious to be unbiassed by petty considerations; but they were both mortal and modern, and the area of their accessible emotions had not profited by such adventitious hardening as unduly favoured the heroes of old.

In February one of their number, Bailie Morrison, paid a visit to Aberdeen to acquaint himself with the estimate held of the Professor by the staid fathers of that city. He

found that both as instructor and as Sabbatarian he fulfilled their requirements. The Bailie from that time espoused his cause, and by the end of the month his candidate and the four already mentioned had distanced the rest, who prepared to retire from the contest. The choice lay finally between Dr William Smith, Professor Macdouall, and Professor Blackie. A considerable number of the electors had decided to make the last their candidate at the second vote, and the Lord Provost had accepted him in this order.

The Council met on Tuesday, March 2, 1852, to decide the event. Lord Provost M'Laren proposed Dr William Smith, and Bailie Morrison proposed John Stuart Blackie. Bailie Boyd proposed Professor Macdouall, while Mr Bonamy Price and Mr Hannah were duly brought forward by their supporters. The first vote gave a majority for Dr Smith, to whom Professor Macdouall was second and Professor Blackie third. The remaining candidates had not secured the requisite number of votes, and their names were erased from the list. The second vote altered the position. The promises were implemented, and Professors Blackie and Macdouall found themselves with eleven votes apiece, while Dr Smith fell back and was expunged from the competition. The third vote gave each sixteen, and the Lord Provost recorded his casting-vote with a generous intimation of his great pleasure in so deciding the issue.

The contest was close, but it ended in victory. A quarter of an hour afterwards Dr Daniel Wilson wrote to the just elected Professor of Greek :—

Three cheers, and three times three! Blackie for ever! After three days of intense anxiety and excitement, I cannot think of sitting down to my regular jog-trot work till I have reached out my arm to Aberdeen, and had a hearty shake with our Professor. Long life and health and happiness to you and your true-hearted wife, who hoped with us to the last against hope. To Bailie Morrison you

cannot return too hearty thanks. And next to him to Mr Horn and George Harvey. Mr Horn did the most, but he was used to it and liked the work, whereas every councillor Harvey called upon was worse to him than taking a dose of aloes, and yet he did it like a Briton out of his love to you.

From Dr Schmitz, the Rector of the Edinburgh High School and one of the disappointed candidates, came a generous greeting:—

I look upon your election as that which, next to my own appointment, is the most desirable thing that could happen. If any one else had got the place, I should have felt mortified, but I feel no such thing now, and I am looking forward to the time when we shall live in the same place and work together to one common end.

A current of congratulations set in towards the lodgings in Aberdeen. The first to arrive was Mr Stodart's. It was given in charge to the guard of the train which reached Aberdeen at nine o'clock on the evening of the eventful day, and the news banished sleep from the Professor's pillow that night. The landlady was ill, and Mrs Blackie had promised to tie a white handkerchief outside the window should tidings of victory arrive, so that next day their friends in Aberdeen should learn at a glance how the battle had sped without knocking at the door. Inquirers came to the end of the street, saw the ensign's flutter, and went home glad in their success.

Mrs Blackie rejoiced almost more than her husband. Aberdeen was not congenial to her temperament. She needed a wider social environment, a life richer in friends, in mental stimulus and occupation. She longed for the companionship of relatives, of whom she saw but little during their stay in the north. Her release from straitened conditions is the burden of every letter which she received on the day following the election. The first ten years of her married life had been years of material dis-

cipline to her, and if they had developed some of her most influential qualities, it had been at considerable cost. Now better times had dawned, and it was not wonderful that the wife rather than the husband hailed their promise of larger means and of ampler opportunities. The Professor himself was glad and thankful; but now that the battle was over, he adjusted himself to its result more tranquilly. All life and all activity came to him so naturally; he enjoyed every hour of every day to so full an extent; he was so emphatically the source of his own enjoyment, which was in struggle rather than in attainment,—that the results of his activity scarcely surprised and seldom elated him.

But he was fully conscious of the debt which he owed to the strenuous labours of his committee, and for some days his pen was busy with acknowledgments of these. Indeed he owed more to these labours than perhaps was evident at the time. After the election was over, even his opponents were heard to admit that in the points of learning and distinction he was the best of the candidates; but while its campaigns were in progress, it took all the zeal and all the persistence of his supporters to overcome the paltry prejudices which the lenses of sectarianism and personal pique distorted and magnified, and which were almost powerful enough to suppress his greater claims, and to admit to the Greek Chair a man inferior in learning and qualified by the accident of Dissent rather than by the deliberate acquisition of sound and varied scholarship.

Amongst the supporters to whom the result was especially due was Mr Thomas Knox, of the firm of Knox, Samuel, & Dickson in Hanover Street. It is interesting to learn that his enthusiastic support was given as much from his conviction of the Professor's moral worth as from that of his classical attainments. This conviction he had

received from an unusual source. A trusted servant in his house had learnt her work in the lodging-house in Dublin Street, whose attics had been John Blackie's home in Edinburgh for some years before he secured the Aberdeen appointment. She had often discussed his diligence, his temperate life, his independence, his constant good-humour, his consideration for others, with her mistress, who, infected by her maid's enthusiasm, espoused his cause with such goodwill that she proved an effective spur in the race. Mr Knox, too, was animated by strong admiration for Mr Robert Horn, with whom he worked in thorough sympathy; and Mr Horn was so identified with Professor Blackie's cause, that when the news of his victory reached the Parliament House a few minutes after two o'clock on that Tuesday afternoon, he was surrounded and congratulated with as much emphasis and cordiality as if he had won the Chair for himself.

Such friends were worthy of the letters, full of gratitude, which they received from the Professor and his wife. Old Mr Blackie, staff in hand, made a glad pilgrimage to every shrine whose oracle had spoken for his son. His joy can be imagined,—his cup was full.

CHAPTER XII.

EDINBURGH.

1852–1857.

PROFESSOR BLACKIE was the champion of the "forward movement" on the whole campaign of education, and particularly from the old camping-ground of University teaching, and it was in this position that men in advance of their day hailed him with hopeful welcome. His very freedom from sectarian exclusiveness, which had threatened to bar the way, helped to pacify the sectarians after the race was won. Just at first there were sinister murmurs that the Westminster Confession would brandish its flaming sword — with a dying menace — at the gates of Edinburgh University; but these subsided, and his earlier signature was accepted without demur. As he offered a friendly front alike to the Dissenting and to the Established Churches, no denomination could resist his genial unconsciousness of any lingering objection entertained by its own variety of Presbyterianism.

Aberdeen had long outlived its earlier prejudices against his opinions. The man himself was sound, in charity with all men, devout, diligent, a Christian. In Aberdeen there was a widespread regret mingled with the civic pride

and congratulation. Divines and scholars alike acknowledged the distinction which he had conferred upon Marischal College, and which shone more conspicuously in the light of his promotion, — for the Aberdonians were not backward to admit merits which Edinburgh claimed from their midst.

His students at Marischal College had signed one of his most influential testimonials, and now offered him a valedictory gift of books. Those of his old students who were attending the Divinity classes in the Edinburgh Free Church College eagerly watched the contest for the Greek Chair, and were found tossing up their caps with enthusiasm at the result. They held, as is recorded in the letter of a fellow-student, that Blackie was the one candidate who could fill the Chair to their content; that although he could not transfer his own learning into less capacious heads, he had the power to animate even the dullest with something of his fire and fervour; that Edinburgh was in great need of just such a spirit in its classical lecture-rooms, where an amiable pedantry had brought study to something very like a standstill.

Personal friends at Aberdeen felt the loss of Professor and Mrs Blackie very keenly, and a large circle in Edinburgh prepared to receive them with hearty welcome. This circle numbered some old friends from Aberdeen, amongst them Professor and Mrs Gregory.

The Edinburgh of 1852 differed much from the Edinburgh of to-day. It was a smaller city, poor rather than rich, its social activities directed by an aristocracy of all the talents rather than by fashion and wealth. The Church, law, medicine, the University, literature and art, combined to produce its keen mental climate. Men's minds were braced into vigorous use in that contentious

but wholesome air. They were distinguished and sought after, as they were individual, with wit, wisdom, skill, and conviction for their characteristics. They had not then the cheap qualifications for success which wealth bestows, and which send a languorous current throughout the social body, depressing what is noble and natural, accentuating what is conventional and unnecessary, vulgarising the energy which should be turned to real uses. Dr Guthrie, Dean Ramsay, Dr William Hanna, Lord Neaves, Lord Cockburn, Dr John Brown, Professor Aytoun, Mr Robert Chambers, Miss Catherine Sinclair, Mr D. O. Hill, Mr George Harvey, Mr Noël Paton and his brother, Horatio Macculloch, Alexander Smith, are but a few significant names culled from the long social roll-call of that day. To cite all that was brilliant and particular would be to fill a chapter with names not yet forgotten. Christopher North was there, although his locks were tawny-white, and his massive form was seldom seen in the streets; but his blue eyes glistened still when he heard a new canto in the everlasting epic of the rod, and about his brows there hovered that far-derived heredity which linked him to Homeric days.

Amongst such friends the Blackies found a place prepared. They came to Edinburgh in March, and stayed with Mr Stodart in Drummond Place. In April the Professor gave a successful course of lectures at the Philosophical Institution on "The Literature of Greece"; and in May, after his installation, he went to Cambridge, where he was the guest of Mr and Mrs Macmillan, and discussed with his host various forthcoming works which he already planned, and some of which indeed were begun.

One of his earliest cares was to come to a decision about

the pronunciation of Greek, and of this his own account may be quoted from the "Notes":—

This question presented itself to me in a more decided attitude than it might have done to many a scholar; partly because I could not do anything merely on the principle of accepting a received tradition, partly because I had always felt convinced that the ear, and not the eye or the understanding, is the main avenue by which the knowledge of languages must be conveyed to a learner. Besides, there was an absolute lawlessness of practice in the matter which it could not be my duty to encourage, one party pronouncing Greek in the Scottish way because it was patriotic, and the other in the English way because it was genteel. To the patriotic party, in so far as patriotism might have a saying in such matters, I was naturally inclined. I accordingly set myself without a moment's delay to examine the whole affair scientifically and historically. The result of my investigations appeared in a small volume published at Edinburgh in the year 1852, as a sufficiently distinct manifesto, before I commenced my teaching. The conclusions which I came to were simple and certain. The Scottish pronunciation and the English were alike founded on a historical tradition standing on no firm philological basis. The Scotch, by their more happy preservation of the Catholic pronunciation of Continental nations, happened to be mainly in the right, while the English happened to be altogether in the wrong. As to accentuation—how it came I do not know—my countrymen were not a whit better than their southern neighbours. Both had, partly out of sheer carelessness, partly from some imagined metrical difficulties, convinced themselves that it was a rational and scholar-like practice to hold as not written the real Greek accents, which were carefully printed on every word of every Greek book by a continuous tradition from the Alexandrian grammarians, and to adopt the Latin accentuation instead. My manifesto on the subject was sent forth with little hope of converting anybody from the error of such ways, but only as a basis of practical operations for myself, which it was impossible for any scholar to dispute. And so it turned out. Nobody disputed my doctrine, but few or none followed my practice.

His pamphlet on the pronunciation of Greek was widely read, and won the approval of the minority of scholars who were not insistent on the sanctity of academic habit. Amongst these was Professor Newman.

If Greek [he wrote] could come by talking, it would indeed be a gain. It will take fifty years at least to persuade the English of it, but every novelty must have a beginning.

The fifty years have nearly run their course, and the prediction is amply verified. During all that time Professor Blackie iterated and reiterated his charge against the teaching of the universities, with so slender a result that they may well be charged with an entire want of conviction of the worth of Greek.

Before the session began he and Mrs Blackie went to Ben Rhydding to try the water-cure established there. The visit was pleasant and profitable, and under both headings may be placed the acquaintance with Miss Elizabeth Pease which it included, and which ripened into a lifelong friendship, favoured by the marriage some years later of Miss Pease to Professor Nichol, and her residence first in Glasgow, and afterwards for many years in Edinburgh.

During the first session of his new work Professor Blackie and his wife lived in lodgings in Princes Street; but they took a house in Castle Street in 1853, and made it their home for seven years. His inaugural lecture was printed and dispersed, and an extract from Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's response to a copy sent him will sufficiently indicate its tenor:—

I have now had leisure to read your pamphlet, in which I have felt great interest. The short paragraph you quote from the modern Greek newspaper is very curious, and leaves no doubt in my mind that the study of Romaic would not only vastly abridge the toil and time consumed now in learning the old Greek, but would also give us a more just and familiar comprehension of the right signification of classic words and phrases. The main distinction, to judge by so short an extract, so far as general style goes, is in the habitual construction of the sentences. The Romaic seems to avoid the inversions common to the old tongue, and in this respect to be similar to the transition of Latin into Italian. Alto-

gether, I think the pamphlet very valuable in its matter, and there is no doubt of its spirit and eloquence as to manner. If I ever get a good three months' summer holiday, I am sufficiently convinced by your treatise to resolve to give myself up to Romaic. Greek can never be a dead tongue; no people that once spoke it can give it up.

The lecture advanced the views which were already associated with the Professor's name. He had begun a translation of Homer some years before, while working for the Homeric Club in Aberdeen, and had already finished a rough recast of the 'Iliad.' The work required a closer personal acquaintance with Greece—its soil, climate, landscape, local conditions, and antiquities—than books could supply, and coupled with these needs was that of a fuller knowledge of the dialects of Greece in their modern forms. He wished to hear them spoken, and to learn their divergences from the language of Homer, upon their own ground. When the session ended he prepared to go to Greece. His equipment was simple enough,—a little store of new clothes, of classics, of Romaic ballads, supplemented by a few introductions, the most valuable of which were to Professor Rangabè and Dr George Finlay. A grey plaid and a broad white hat gave the finishing touches to his travelling costume, and on April 18 he embarked at Leith on the Hamburg steamer, and took train for Berlin on the day of its arrival. A couple of days at Berlin, where he reviewed the haunts of his student days, from the very position to which they had inspired his aims, and a long, slow journey to Vienna, formed the unexciting prelude to further experiences. From Vienna he made his way, by diligence, through Styria, Carinthia, Carniola, to Trieste, re-covering the old ground which had led him to Italy twenty years earlier. At Trieste he embarked for Athens on a vessel which stopped at Corfu, Cephalonia, and Xante, using up a whole week in the cruise, so that more than a

fortnight elapsed between his start from Leith and his finish on May 4 at Athens. But the voyage was fruitful of interesting impressions. On his arrival he presented the two letters already mentioned, and found Dr George Finlay and Professor Rangabè full of kindly attentions. Some passages from his first letter, despatched from Athens, will best express his state of mind in this adventure, at once so new and so checkered with familiar associations.

You will be happy to hear [he wrote to his wife] that I have got a most excellent lodging, clean, neat, healthy, and all that could be desired. The price is 140 drachms a-month, including victuals, the drachm being about 9 pence. The owner of the house expects you to take your victuals from him as part of his profit. I was most fortunate in being brought into an excellent house by Dr Finlay, my learned countryman, who resides here, and who is extremely kind. It is situated on the upper part of the city, in a fine airy situation, quite close to the University, and not far from the palace of King Otho. I was amused when I found myself in University Street, as if the shop could never leave me, and with a large seminary for young ladies exactly opposite my south window! From this window also I have a view open to the pillared range of the Parthenon right in front; while on my right the hill is seen from the brow of which Xerxes, seated on a golden throne, looked out on the narrow firth of Salamis, crowded with the navy of the East; and to my left rises honeyed Hymettus. Behind the house there is a garden, which will soon be richly shaded with the quick-spreading foliage of the vines, and this garden looks out on the famous mountain Lycabettus, which overhangs Athens as Arthur Seat does Edinburgh. It is an isolated conical hill of a very striking character. I mounted it this morning, and took about two hours to achieve the feat easily. Add to all this, that in my immediate neighbourhood are the streets of Hippocrates and Aristeides, Sophocles and Euripides, and you may imagine that to a classical man no strange lodging could be more familiar. I am both at home here and not at home in a manner that considerably disturbs me, so that as yet I scarcely know where I am nor how to feel, and am habitually overpowered by a pleasant sort of discomfort which I should find it difficult to explain. But every new situation makes me feel uncomfortable at first, so I shall just sit quietly in the broad sun that shines here—I speak allegorically—and let the fruit which is now crude ripen in

God's time. I am learning many things. What has delighted me most since entering this country, and what I am sure would chiefly delight you, is the natural and strikingly dramatic character of the people and their mode of life. I have a hundred times fancied myself in the midst of some strange melodrama. The dresses of the people are so various and picturesque, the gait of the Greeks and Albanese has something in it so noble and kingly, the contour of their features is often so fine, the expression of the face now blithe and generous, grand and open—now dark, scowling, and savage,—the whole so lively, so easy, natural, and unconstrained, that to a person just slipt from the leading-strings of cold Edinburgh proprieties and etiquettes, the sensation of strange, rich naturalness was magical. Many of the men whom I see give a living idea of a Homeric Agamemnon or Ajax, while others again are like the murderers in "Macbeth" or "Richard," and a great deal more ferocious—cut-throat faces, and yet not without a certain rude grandeur of their own which our English town-bred murderers never have. I understood Mr King's Greek sermon to-day quite well, but I feel great difficulty in following any conversation. The old words are used in new ways. I can only persevere. I have found here my London correspondent Clyde—a light-haired, sunny-faced Scotsman—who is working hard at the modern Greek, and feels more and more persuaded every day that the system he and I are following is at once the easiest and the most direct to a thorough knowledge of the great language. He has been two months in lodgings, and is able to tell me many things that I would not otherwise have got hold of so soon.

As soon as he was settled Professor Blackie began to attend lectures at the University, and made daily some progress in understanding the modern Greek. But the great heat, which he had not foreseen, and which affected his health, interfered with his study both of the language and the antiquities. His outfit had not been chosen in view of excessive heat, and he was obliged to reconstruct it, making purchases of white linen suits, and laying aside the accustomed plaid. As May wore to an end he began a series of excursions, to Argos, Corinth, and Nauplia, in which Mr Clyde was his companion. His courage in talking right and left with the people helped the Professor

to make trial of his own repertory, which was rapidly increasing. By the end of May he was better used to the climate, and his life in Athens had rolled into a rut of habit which he described as follows:—

In the morning I generally take a walk of about two hours, surveying some part of the ground sacred to scholars. At nine I have breakfast—coffee, omelettes, bread and butter—sheep's butter! In the forenoon I study Greek and topography. At three I dine—soup, fish, roast, boiled, salad, oranges; and in the evening I walk out and enjoy the cool air, and visit some scene of classic interest. Before returning home I generally drop into a coffee-house, with which this place abounds, and taking a small cup of black coffee and a large tumbler of cold water, observe the public *idlesse* of the Greeks, and muse myself idly on nothing determinate.

Other letters are varied with accounts of dinners at the English and Prussian embassies, and evening parties at the houses of professors, chaplains, and missionaries.

Early in June he was invited to join Professor Kendrick, Mr Arnold, and Mr Chase in an excursion through Northern Greece, and he gladly accompanied them. They spent ten days in visiting Thermopylæ, Platæa, Orchomenos, Thebes, Delphi, and the range of Parnassus. Their travels were made on horseback, and they took provisions with them to supplement the fare in out-of-the-way places. Some thirty miles was the average day's journey, and the Professor found it most fatiguing. "Such continual jolting and shaking, and such monotonous stretching of muscles by no means accustomed to tension, and such confinement of limbs fond of capricious liberty, became a real torture to my impatient spirit." But the mountain breeze of Delphi compensated for much after the heat of Athens. To ascend Parnassus, they exchanged their horses for mules, "the native trotters of the rock, and by the time the sun was passing slantingly through the dark pines, found ourselves in a green hollow on the verge of the snow

region of the mountain." Here they found some shepherds at seesaw on a pole in front of a hut rank of its store of cheeses. This was a resting-place, and they dismounted to encamp for the night round a fire outside the hut, at which they cooked their supper. The shepherds cut down branches of the spruce firs, and on the fragrant mattress which they strewed they slept all night under the dewless skies. He longed, as he had done a hundred times in Greece, for George Harvey's presence and recording brush. Next morning, as they climbed the winding slope of the mountain, something of the afflatus which his Highland Bens were wont to breathe refreshed his spirit, and he broke forth into a descriptive song, — the only song he uttered in Greece.

On June 13 he returned to the hot confinement of Athens. Here he was vexed by a drought of rhyme. "My spiritual steam is low, and though I have several times attempted to write verses in this land so full of poetical temptations, I cannot succeed. I must content myself with the humbler occupations of amassing and arranging materials." A week of the capital now sufficed him, and he started at its end for Sunium and Marathon, returning by the back of Pentelicus. Then a short visit to the Rangabès at their summer home in Cephissia, on the slopes of Pentelicus,—where green fields and oliveyards and streams of water make an oasis in dusty Attica,—ended in a pleasant experience this pregnant time. For in spite of heat, of illness, and discomfort, he had fulfilled many of his desires, and had reaped and garnered seed to be sown in other soil, and to fructify to other uses; and he recorded 1853 as the most memorable year of his life.

He left by steamer about July 3, and was put ashore at Xante, where he spent some days with Mr Lindsay. These, however, were days of lassitude and illness, and were

occupied in reading "Lalla Rookh," while stretched on a sofa. He left for Trieste in the steamer Adria, and took rail there for Vienna, whence he steamed up the Danube to Linz, travelled to Munich,—revisiting its Glyptothek for the sake of Greece,—and then sped on to Bonn, where he paid a fleeting visit to his friend Professor Brandes, and whence he hurried home.

I am coming home [he wrote from Vienna], God be praised, much enriched with new ideas and views and feelings in reference to Greek man and Greek nature that books could never have given me. A little living experience of this kind is worth libraries of learning—to me at least, who never had any great capacity for folios.

Amongst his gains was the frequently illustrated observation that the modern Greeks seek to preserve their language pure from foreign influence, and reject Italian, Roumanian, and Turkish words as equivalents for their own far-descended and high-sounding epithets. Another gain was the conviction that the translation of Homer which he had begun was unsatisfactory from lack of knowledge, and must be set aside for serious labour at the subject. This labour may be dated from the year which followed his visit to Greece.

During his absence his wife had stayed with old Mr Blackie in Gayfield Square. Her purpose in spending the summer in Edinburgh was the practical one of setting in order and furnishing with care, taste, and economy the house in Castle Street which they had chosen to be their home. Her sister, Miss Augusta Wyld, shared Mr Blackie's hospitality, and helped her in the many details of her undertaking. But they did not purpose to occupy the house immediately on the Professor's return, as some needed refreshing from hills and sea had been planned for August, and was carried out in Arran when he returned.

The Town Council had granted his application for an

assistant lecturer, and he chose his old pupil and valued friend Mr James Donaldson, whose help, both initiatory and supplementary, served to relieve the pressure of mere schoolmastering, and to give room for more purely professorial work. The two friends were of one mind with regard to the methods of teaching and of pronunciation, and in view of both they studied modern Greek together in the 'Songs of the Klephts,' the works of Professor Rangabè, and the newspapers which Dr Finlay sent periodically from Athens. Correspondence in the language with Athenian friends formed part of their practice, while Dr Finlay kept them in touch with the stir and rumour of unsettled Greece and its disappointing Othonian Government.

A passage in the "Notes" reviews this and subsequent epochs of his teaching, and may be quoted once for all, as it is tedious to recur to this subject in a biography of moderate length:—

The work of the Greek classes—while it lasted no more than five months at full tension—was sufficiently severe. Four hours a-day, and these continuous with only an hour's interval between the forenoon and afternoon. However, I was not the man to fret over the strain of the work; it was not the quantity but the quality of the work that in the least annoyed me. Of these four hours, two were devoted to the junior class, one to each of the senior classes. The best strength of the Professor's brain was consumed for two hours every day in doing work which was beneath the level of the rectorial teaching in the High School. The consequence of heaping such an amount of purely elementary work on his head was to prevent his doing what his best ambition prompted him to do for his more advanced classes. I at length got the University Commission to appoint a tutor to the junior classes of Greek, Latin, and Mathematics. This adoption of the tutorial system into the Scottish Universities was a most important step in advance. With regard to the special conduct of the class, I confined my activity with the junior class altogether to reading and writing, and the training of the ear by familiar dialogues. To my second class I gave a lecture only once a-week, and to my highest class only twice a-week; and my

whole experience as a teacher has convinced me more and more of the wisdom of the Socratic method, by which the function of the teacher is confined as much as possible to teaching the pupil to teach himself. I therefore adopted the habit of starting problems, and ordering papers for their solution, which were afterwards publicly discussed. Formal essays on large subjects I did not prescribe, partly because it was apparent that even the most advanced of my pupils would be more advantageously employed in reading Greek than in writing English, partly because there was large opportunity for writing essays in other classes. For essays I substituted special subjects of study, with special examinations and special distinctions, a procedure which secured all the substantial good of the essay without any of the evil. To kindle if possible some spark of noble enterprise in the new field of Comparative Philology, I gave a special prize every year for studies in the science of languages, the competition for which always produced some half-dozen of very creditable papers. But the greatest and most notable reform which I introduced was the change that, through my agency, assisted by the regulations of the University Commissioners above mentioned, took place in the third or advanced class. This class is one which the Professor is in no wise bound to teach, but is undertaken for the profit and honour of the University. When I commenced teaching, it numbered thirty-nine students. When my system began to produce its full fruits, I was left with only a dozen. Was this a sign of advance? Certainly, and one of the surest. By the elevation which had taken place in the platform of the first two classes, the second class performed for many the functions that had previously been performed by the third. Besides, by the new regulations, for the best type of students only one year's Greek was now required; and for this type, as the first class was too low, the third was too high: so the highest Greek came to be deserted more and more, and towards the end of the session I was sometimes left with only half-a-dozen of students. All this was quite right. I was not long of observing that the third class was not even attended by the best students, but by some who wished in a cheap way to supplement the deficiencies of previous years. So I pitched it up by a bold stroke far above the reach of those fellows, and secured at last a select few to follow me in philosophy, poetry, and philology as far as it might be possible for me to fly, or convenient for them to follow.

The University Commission alluded to in this extract from the "Notes" was that of 1858, which was more due

to the demand for reform excited by Professor Blackie's letters, pamphlets, and lectures, than to any other cause. Its main achievement was to substitute a three years' for a four years' course, and so to throw a heavier responsibility upon the secondary schools. It set the ball rolling, sanctioning discontent with the prevailing deadlock in education, and conducting it through sixteen years of legitimate agitation to the Commission of Inquiry which began its work in 1875, and resulted in the Executive Commission of 1890, whose work will call for attention in a future chapter.

In close connection with the Professor's conduct of the Greek class is the opinion, or rather variety of opinions, as to his success in teaching. It seems to be conceded by all students who were really in earnest to learn as much Greek as could be learnt in the contracted sessions of our Universities, that Professor Blackie was a vivid, inspiring, and most helpful teacher; that he grudged no trouble in the class-room, or out of it, to help those who wished to help themselves; that he encouraged such by gifts not only of books but of his leisure; and that more particularly those who were at once diligent and poor found him ready to supplement in the evening and at his own house the instruction of the morning with explanation, with reading, with the use of references, with the loan of books to which they could otherwise have had no access, with the sight of rare illustrations, and above all with the frank and hearty respect which their industry inspired in him, which led him often to express admiration for many a modest and unpretending student in whom the scholarly element, backed by perseverance and undaunted by poverty, grew and developed in his favouring regard. These men fill the desks in Scottish church and school, and are to be found cherishing their old Professor's memory with love

and gratitude in many a manse at home and abroad, on African veldt and in Canadian farm, on ranch and sheep-run, wherever Scotchmen penetrate and do their country credit. The opinion of such students as, from lack of intelligence, preferred to make the class-room a bear-garden is without importance. Their genial teacher, indulgent to the young by reason of his own unending youth, of his own sympathy with the freakishness of youth, was perhaps too little versed in pedagogic expedients for class government. Frowns and majesty, the dictatorial brow, the sarcasm edged so keenly that it can even flay the mental epidermis of a rowdy student, were no part of his congenital equipment, and his adoption of their artillery failed at times. But we have ample testimony to his many-sided fitness for work, to his unwearied application of every method which could appeal to the curiosity, to the interest, to the intelligence of his class, which could rouse its members from the half-paralysed stupor into which the teaching of languages is apt to plunge the learner. For many years he worked not merely on the respectable level of the customary professor, but far beyond and above it, making flights and excursions of the most stimulating character, practising the innovations which are now becoming the commonplaces of reformed teaching, and never stinting the personal labour which might replenish, enrich, and enliven the supply which he controlled.

In the later years of his professoriate it was to some extent noticeable that he had wearied a little of the constant draughts upon his invention and endurance; that his interest was diverted to so many questions of general importance that he overflowed with these at times into devious prologues to Xenophon or Thucydides; and that he became, as men of original incentive are apt to become, somewhat too independent of the conditions imposed by

the class-room and the class hours. But many men whose experience of his teaching belongs to this later period are prepared to testify that, notwithstanding his discursiveness, he set them on the right road to discover Greek for themselves, and taught them to take delight in the treasures which it at once stores and distributes.

In the spring of 1854 we find him again lecturing to the members of the Philosophical Institution, and calling down upon himself the natural ire of a Catholic priest amongst their number by an erratic excursion into polemics when treating of the æsthetical character of the medieval Church.

The æsthetics of church architecture engaged his leisure interest this year, and we find him in September making a tour of cathedrals — Durham, Lincoln, Peterborough, Winchester, Salisbury, and Ely. This was interrupted by a few weeks at Moor Park under Dr Lane's care—walking, driving, and rhyming on fine days, dancing jigs in the dining-room and posting up his correspondence when it rained. He enjoyed every hour of his stay, and entreated his wife by every post to join him, but in vain. Mrs Blackie preferred to spend quiet days in summer amongst the friends whom she already knew, to sharing his enterprise amongst strangers. So he cut short the weeks in Surrey, and took up the clue of his cathedral tour, and towards the end of October they forgathered and returned to Edinburgh.

During these summer wanderings the habit of mornings devoted to work was never intermitted. Homer and a goodly pile of Homeric commentators accompanied him this year wherever he went, and we learn that at Moor Park he finished his translation of the first six books of the 'Iliad.'

In Edinburgh his time was amply occupied. Professor

Bernays asked him towards the end of the year to take up the subject of old Latin and Greek Inscriptions—Hermeneutics being a branch of archæology concerning which Germany was both urgent and successful. He answered on the first day of 1855:—

I find so much to do in rich clover-fields that I cannot be induced to set out on an exploring expedition among cold barren crags for the sake of half-a-dozen saxifrages and other rare flowers, nourished in those frozen regions by snow-water. I have made a vow to keep to one kind of work, and that for which I am plainly cut out by nature. I do not cherish the most distant expectation of becoming an archæologist. I am at my old trade of rhyming again in various shapes—among others, translating Homer's 'Iliad' into English ballad measure. This is my business in the summer months. In winter my strength is so frittered away with teaching—the greater part being of the most elementary character—that I am not able to attempt anything that may in any sense be styled production.

In the summers of 1855 and 1856 he and Mrs Blackie made their headquarters at Liebenstein, Saxe-Meiningen, for three months, while he prosecuted his inquiries into German systems of education as far afield as Halle and Berlin.

A letter to the Provost and Town Council of Edinburgh embodied the obvious conclusions which resulted from renewed comparison of the system in Germany with that at home, and the winter of the second year found him putting these conclusions in the van of controversial onset by addressing them to the editor of the 'Times.' The subject had now become familiar, by means of newspapers and pamphlets, to the public concerned, and he met with vigorous co-operation from many sources. His own colleagues in Edinburgh University were at last with him, but for the one exception, his opponent from first to last. He had attained to this important stage, that the academic corporation to which he belonged admitted and cautiously advo-

cated a measure of reform. But his scheme for reform after the German pattern was not so heartily endorsed, nor was he unduly obstinate on that point. Indeed, when the whole matter came to its practical stage he forbore both influence and interference. His share was, as Dr Guthrie phrased it, "to wake up the country with his trumpet."

The social life interlinked with these activities was rich and varied. Old friendship drew him always closer to George Harvey and Dr John Brown. Sydney Dobell was often in Edinburgh, and sought his cheerful society. Dr George Finlay appeared in the Modern Athens from time to time, laden with the woes of its old and eponymous metropolis. Thus he announced his arrival in the summer of 1857 :—

I am still so confused in my head with the heat of Athens, the dust raised by the change of Ministry, the army of occupation, the sweeping of the palace, and our old friend Boreas, that I cannot recollect anything to say to you except that you were never forgotten at the headquarters of marble monuments and marble dust. I hope to be in Edinburgh soon. I remained a week in London talking politics and art, and mixing them up in utter desperation of conveying a meaning to people who, having seen Constantinople, know everything!

Dr John Carlyle was a frequent visitor; with Dr Guthrie and Dean Ramsay he had established the friendliest relations. If he had just lost Sir William Hamilton, the honoured friend of many years, he had gained his philosophic successor, Professor Campbell Fraser, who to a deep and stable concern with ideas added a gentle humour, which played upon the shadowy realities of existence as sunlight plays upon vapour.

Edinburgh was wealthy in possessing, magnetic in attracting, genial souls, and the "light of other days" still sparkled in their intercourse. The Professor had chosen Dr Guthrie

to be his pastor in ordinary, and sat Sunday after Sunday in a corner of the big square pew sacred to the elders and to distinguished worshippers—just under the pulpit, where the tall Doctor spake rousing words that moved and swayed the crowd beneath him. For his eloquence,—full of emotion, of simile, of elevation, of conviction, vibrating with love of nature and of man,—Professor Blackie chose him, and because his large sympathy refused all channels dug by sect, and flowed out into the broad stream whose waters God has designed for the refreshing of all mankind. The plaid, the thick stick, the low-crowned hat, the brown wig worn for some years, the finely cut profile, the devout attitude in prayer, the close attention, were all familiar to the congregation of Free St John's during the latter half of Dr Guthrie's ministry.

Connected also with these years was the "Blackie Brotherhood," instituted by the Professor to bring together, at least once in twelve months, a little group of friends belonging to the inner circle. We find twelve of these upon its first roll-call: Mr Hunter of Craigcrook and his son, Mr Kinnear, Dr Lindsay Alexander, Dr Hanna, Dr Walter C. Smith, Professor Campbell Fraser, Dr John Brown, Mr George Harvey, Mr Noël Paton, Mr D. O. Hill, and Dr Gairdner. Parts in some kind were important to brotherhood, but the essential qualification was moral nobility of character. Poets, painters, philosophers, and divines were only qualified if to their gifts they added the Christian graces of faith, hope, and charity. Atheists and scoffers were classed with bigots and dogmatists, and with the "damnatory orthodox," in disability. Such men are never poets, nor sing the lyrics of love, nature, and good-fellowship, and they would have been out of place in that kindly company, which had a preference for "moral nobility" tempered by song. Their communion, bodily and

prandially, was in one of the Princes Street hotels; spiritually, "in that genial region of fervid and flowery spontaneity in which, as in an earthly Paradise, it was the privilege of the Brotherhood to dwell." The "Blackie Brotherhood" lasted for a quarter of a century, and the gaps which death made in its ranks were filled by men with every worthy attribute. It is impossible now to recover its merry jests and sparkling humour. The "snows of yesteryear" endure a winter long; its laughter is but a waft of fragrance which no man can register.

CHAPTER XIII.

LAYS, LECTURES, AND LYRICS.

1857–1860.

THE minstrel flame, which had nearly flickered out in Athens, blazed up again, fanned by airs from the western seas at Arran, and by pine-scented breezes at Braemar; and at the end of 1856 he completed a volume of original verse, called 'Lays and Legends of Ancient Greece,' and published by Messrs Blackwood & Sons. Although mainly concerned with the mythical and heroic stories of Greece, there were appended to these the "Braemar Ballads," inspired by a summer sojourn there. Marching alone down the glens and up the mountains, his faculties quickened by movement in the fresh and heather-sweetened air, he covered much ground in his wanderings. As he walked he sang and shouted his lays into shape, aided rather than diverted by the shifting scenes of nature in her solitudes, or of peasant life and industry. For the first time he was brought face to face with deserted homesteads, with ruined hamlets, with patches—once kindly and provident—merging into the surrounding waste, with the wilding bushes from which the vanished hands had gathered fruits in their season, with all those relics of humble life which touch us with a

pathos far nearer tears than do the crumbling towers of feudalism. They filled him with sympathy, and sent him straight to the study of that struggle, age after age, between peasant and proprietor. With characteristic energy he mastered its annals in the past, and made acquaintance with that old agrarian feud which separated into hostile camps the Plebeians and Patricians of Rome. His thoughts were soon articulate both in verse and prose. The "Braemar Ballads" were added to the Greek Lays, and a letter was sent to the 'Times,' which was not only inserted in the columns of that influential journal, but endorsed and made conspicuous by a sympathetic leading article. Professor Blackie awoke to find himself the centre of a storm of letters more or less hostile from all parts of the kingdom. He bore the onset blithely as was his wont, and settled himself all the more firmly into his attitude of challenge. No war-horse ever welcomed the battle with a readier response.

As a poetic venture the 'Lays and Legends of Ancient Greece' were much criticised, and although they pleased the taste of those who liked their poetry fervid, it was not surprising that the finer critics of the time found fault with their torrent of troubled verbiage. For, in spite of their fervour, they are deficient in interest, rude in construction, and suggest the schoolboy in expression. Their poet was not wholly a poet. He solaced himself with rhyme, but did not possess the great poetic gift which transmutes the very words of common life into gems that gleam and glow, by some subtle setting, by some immersion into fire which releases the pure gold from the dross. His genius selected on ethical, not on æsthetical, grounds. Whatsoever things were noble, manly, heroic, patriotic, devout — on these things he rhymed, and was a poet more by such selection than by rendering. When he

told a straightforward story in simple words he approached poetic utterance, and the incident of the reveller Polemo convinced of righteousness by Xenocrates is almost on the plane of poetry. But a wayward use of language depreciates even this; for to apply in verse the same loose copiousness which makes unconsidered talk so worthless is to deform its structure and to paralyse its aim. From this extravagance he was seldom able to refrain, so that just as seldom did he reach the level of strong and simple diction, commensurate with the thought, unvexed by bluster and unconfused by ineptitude.

After a visit to Oxford in June 1857, he and Mrs Blackie went to Heidelberg. The heat was abnormal. The Neckar was reduced to a depth of four feet, the steamers were stopped, and people forded the river on foot. The leaves faded from the trees before summer was ended, and a thunderbolt fell in the garden of the house where they lodged. It was a trying season, and as soon as August ended, Mrs Blackie left with Mrs Stirling and Miss Leslie for Bonn, and the Professor made a short flight to Berlin to see his old friend and instructor Professor Gerhard, and described various new social experiences in a letter to Bonn.

I have been introduced to a vast array of notables. I took tea at Gerhard's one night with the three brothers Grimm, of whom Jacob is the most famous—a fine, quiet, intelligent old man with white hair, and with a certain plain rusticity of manner and homeliness of accent that agree admirably with the simple and honest tone of his mind. I have seen Lepsius, the great Egyptian scholar, an active, young-looking man not above forty; Boeckh, the patriarch of German Hellenists; Ritter, the geographer, Ranke, the historian, and many more. I have visited two of the principal gymnasia, and made acquaintance with the schoolmasters, or Professors as they are, and in respect of learning well deserve to be, called.

From Professor Gerhard he learned that his old Roman

friend the Lutheran chaplain was settled near Halle, and he diverged from the direct route to Bonn that he might spend a day with him. A halt at Eisenach and a short journey afterwards brought him to the valley of the Lahn, down which he walked, visiting Marburg on the way, and finding a steamer at Coblentz for Bonn.

Naturally the following winter witnessed a crop of letters and lectures on educational reform which had germinated at Berlin and Bonn. But early in 1858 appeared as well his book 'On Beauty,' published by Messrs Sutherland & Knox, and fulfilling the expectation which his treatment of the subject many years before, in the popular lecture given in Aberdeen, had roused amongst both friends and students. He took refuge in this book from the drudgery of his Homeric treatises and translation, these involving him in so vast a study of ponderous authorities as to occasion periods of sheer fatigue, when he turned to matters more disposable. He dedicated the volume to his old friends George Harvey, Robert Horn, and Dr John Brown, "in memory of pure pleasures and happy hours." A few sentences from the "beloved physician's" letter of thanks express the general appreciation amongst his friends:—

I am vain enough to feel very happy in having my name upon it, along with our other true friends You said when I last saw you that this volume would not sell so well as the Poems: if it does not it is the public's own blame, but I will not believe it for two years to come. If I mistake not, there is more in the honest instincts, the broad sympathy, the genuine philosophy and cordial love of all that is lovable as expressed in these Discourses, to take and to hold, and to impress the great mass of thinking men and women, than in all else that our century has yet seen, not excepting my own great Ruskin. Many thanks for the book and the dedication, and for all the pleasure it has been to me to know and to love you. Ever affectionately, J. Brown.

If we take toll enough from this verdict to exclude its personal enthusiasm, we have still left an opinion from a very candid critic, which was echoed by many an anthority on the subject. And if we turn to the book itself, we are astonished to find that the Professor's and not the Doctor's practical estimate proved to be correct.

Three lectures on Beauty, supplemented by an essay on "Plato's Doctrine of the Beautiful," form its contents. Its germ was his indignation against the views held by the old Earl of Aberdeen and by Lord Jeffrey and the Rev. Archibald Alison, according to whom there is no such thing as beauty pure and simple, our ideas having become crystallised into a doctrine of the beautiful from hereditary association. The Professor here inveighed against this opinion as a "Caledonian revival of old Attic sophistry." The lecture in Aberdeen had protested against this dreary heresy, but at that time his hold of the subject was not fully instructed. Since then his advanced class-work had called for a careful study of Platonic æsthetics, for which he not only revived his old cogitations, but made research into every expression of the beautiful in nature and in art. His cathedral tours, his reading, his travels on foot, his own intuitions educated into convictions, had conspired to inform and ripen the opinion to which he had spontaneously given utterance in the lecture.

For the sake of his students he connected with the study of Plato three lectures upon the doctrine of the beautiful, and these academical discourses, verified and revised, formed the bulk of his book 'On Beauty.' The vigour, purity, and lucidity of its style emphasise the care with which he used his notable gift of prose writing, as compared with the recklessness of his verse. His own estimate ranks it as "one of the most original books that I have written, as it was entirely thought out of my own

head, and had in its genesis and growth nothing at all to do with that Platonism which I added to it as a sort of appendix."

About the middle of January 1858 he was in Glasgow, rousing the apathy of its merchant citizens on the question of schools and universities by a lecture in the Educational Institute—a lecture which received the justice of full report in the 'Herald,' instead of the usual unintelligent paragraph, which so often misrepresented in the newspapers the aim of his public utterances by reporting only their freakish interpolations. This lecture carried weight in the western capital, arousing interest and conquering local prejudice.

The spring and early summer were spent in England; Mrs Blackie accompanied her husband to London and shared his experiences. These included meetings with the Carlyles, with Leigh Hunt, Charles Kingsley, Dr Trench, and the Ernest Bunsens. Towards the end of May the Professor went to Cambridge, where he found the dons somewhat agitated by the approaching advent of the Royal Commission on University Reform, whose operations threatened to be drastic. "The reform will scarcely be so sweeping as they require," was his comment; "in this country all reforms generally get the fangs pulled out and the claws pared very carefully." His host was Professor Thompson at Trinity, but he called on

the famous Whewell, and was received with great politeness. I am to dine in hall as his guest to-day He is a grand-looking man—tall, and yet admirably proportioned. He is one of the most vigorous and firmly knit men in England: drinks a bottle of port every day. He is a portentous encyclopædist, and is said to know everything under the sun even better than those who know it best. Quite a different man is Thompson—a modest confessor of ignorance when he does not know, but thoroughly and accurately real when he does know. He is certainly liberal in theological matters—

which indeed seems to be the general undertone here. They seem to prefer keeping certain delicate matters atmosphered in a convenient mist. As things go at present, one can scarcely blame them. But there will come a volcanic outburst some day that will blow all their mists away in a style both grim and ludicrous, I fancy.

From Cambridge he walked to Huntingdon, "to pay worship at the shrine of Oliver Cromwell," and rejoined his wife in London early in June. Their stay was prolonged to the end of July, and he suffered from the heat of crowded halls and houses, so that on their return to Scotland they resorted to Moffat for recovery. Here hills and glens and Covenanting memories restored him, and he busied himself with an article on Bunsen—now made Baron and Freiherr von Bunsen, and living in retirement at a villa on the banks of the Neckar, opposite the castle of Heidelberg, where he used his leisure to issue a corrected text of the Bible, enriched with copious notes,—an evening time of light after a day of faithful toil.

The Hellenic Society attacked the "Agamemnon" of Æschylus during the winter, and amongst new members enrolled were Mr Noël Paton and the Rev. William Pulsford, pastor of an Independent chapel in Edinburgh, whose courage and spirituality were leading a little congregation of faithful souls to new discoveries in the Christian life.

But the records of this winter are scanty. A growing acquaintance with Mr Robert Chambers and his family is conspicuous amongst them. One of the publisher's daughters, Janet Chambers, was a frequent visitor, and won the liveliest affection from both Professor and Mrs Blackie. Her memory has grown dim in the city, where once she reigned over the hearts of her friends. Aspiring after all things lovely and of good report, she taught in its slums the gospel of cleanliness, and achieved with the sweet

influences of her smiles, her ardour, and her understanding, a success of initiative, now grown into organised endeavour, although the heirs of her labours have all but forgotten her name. A generation ago she died, and the radiance of her face, and her soul uplifted to God, passed into His presence.

Another friend had become important to the Blackies, Miss Frances Stoddart, the angler-poet's eldest sister, a woman of rare accomplishment, and of still rarer modesty, and for the few years which remained of her life the frequent partner of their summer travels. These two shared the plans made for June and July in 1859.

The four friends went to Ambleside for the first, and three of them to Grange in Borrowdale for the second, month. There Miss Chambers stayed till July 21, and inspired no fewer than four of the lyrics with which the Professor busied himself during the summer months. One of these followed her the day after she left. It is called "Janet" in the 'Lyrical Poems,' and drew from her the acknowledgment:—

> It is very lovely, but too much for me; it makes me sad and humble. Thank you for the undeserved sentiments expressed in the poem; thank you for everything.

During their stay in Ambleside, amongst many new acquaintances, they met Miss Martineau, and spent an evening with her. She had reached a stage of increasing ill-health, however, and they saw her only once. They were busied with Robertson of Brighton's sermons, and had for engrossing interest Garibaldi and his golden ventures. Sydney Dobell wrote to the Professor in June:—

> Can you think of Garibaldi's corps without a sympathy that is almost compassion? They stir me to the depths with that kind of unspeakable pity with which one looks upon more than mortal

happiness. Think of those young thousands,—many enough for hope, few enough for glory,—confident toward God and man in a cause utterly noble, lifted by that confidence into unknown powers and a brotherhood almost religious in the equality of hero with hero, marching—June underfoot and overhead—through the ringing of falling chains and the light of a people's eyes, while the fondest and loveliest of the land are waiting to reward them if they live, or nurse them if they fall, and mothers bless and children pray, and old men envy, and Italy in the stature of her new freedom—at every step more imperial as she goes—leads them from victory to victory across the intoxicating summer of this Present to the hazy golden Future of a boyish patriot's dream. What kind of climax will be possible on this earth to men who have begun life's drama with such a first act?

Several letters from Dr George Finlay show the constancy of the Professor's correspondence with his friend in Athens, and their tenor tells us how fully they entered into each other's interests. Thus one received at Ambleside starts with an entertaining parable:—

Lollianos is the name I have given to a well-preserved bust which now adorns the end of the corridor in my house. Lollianos was professor and Strategos, then the high office in the municipality of Athens. During his mayoralty he did everything in his power to alleviate the suffering caused by a famine. But before the corn arrived the Athenians began to stone him. Pancratias, the Cynic, saved him by asking the enraged populace, "Whether they did not know when they elected Lollianos that his trade was to make phrases and not bread?" I quote this from Greece under the Romans, to warn you that you may starve with university reform unless you continue to waste your time on the little boys.

In August the Blackies returned to Edinburgh, and the Professor plunged once more into the depths of Homeric research and translation. He sought opinions from Mr Theodore Martin, Mr Campbell Shairp, and other critical friends as to the quality of his lines.

I was much interested [wrote Mr Shairp from St Andrews] in what you read me of your Homer. Don't spare the linial labour,

for if it is to succeed it must have the trick of sound to catch the vulgar rather than the learned ear. The only thing I fear is whether the ballad couplet will not become monotonous when prolonged through 24 books. I almost despair of any metre of ours answering to Homer's hexameter.

About the middle of September the British Association met at Aberdeen under Prince Albert's presidency, and the Professor was invited by his old friend Mr Forbes White to attend its meetings from the hospitable shelter of his home in Bon Accord Square. Miss Chambers travelled north with him, and his record of the journey is worth quoting :—

Such a monster train, with 900 people in one huge winding line! We had in our carriage a trump-card of a fellow, the Rev. Norman Macleod of Glasgow, who kept us in a roar of laughter with a succession of the most admirable jokes and humorous stories. The very look of the man is a joy, so round, so full, so jovial, so clear, bright, healthy, and hilarious! I was quite prepared to fall in love with him by what I had previously known, and now fell right into his arms at once. What a good and pleasant thing is a jovial man, how transcendently good is a jovial *priest!* Jenny was tired with her previous day's work, but could not help brightening up under the radiant influence of the lively theologer; she got upon her sanitary hobby-horse, and made various sage remarks, dear lassie! We found here Scott, Edersheim, Dr Cairns of Berwick, with Professor and Mrs Geddes, and the three Miss Johnstones.

On September 17 he wrote :—

The address of the Prince was full of sound sense, philosophy, and tact. Germany has always ideas. He looked very bland and benign, and gave me a special nod as he walked out from the Geological Section on Thursday. You must understand that in order to secure to myself some real benefit I at once determined to attend regularly only one section, and various reasons combined to make me choose the Geological Section. I have now attended three days for four hours each, and have heard much good matter, and begin to feel myself at home in the present state of the most important discoveries. The Old Red Sandstone, as usual, plays a great figure in the debates. It is most edifying to me to contemplate the variety

of character exhibited by the speakers. Our friend Ramsay is a direct, cheerful, distinct fellow, never long-winded, and always to the point. Sir R. Murchison has the decision of an old soldier, and is quite erect, not at all grey, though he has been hammering rocks all over the world for thirty-five years since he left the army. The most massive brain and finely chiselled scientific face is Sir Charles Lyell's; and almost all of the leading men have a vigour and directness about their style of speaking that seems to be borrowed from the clear blow of the hammer which they practise on the rocks.

On September 20 he continued :—

I am still in a vortex. Last night we had a dinner of the "Red Lions," a club founded by Forbes, Bennett, Huxley, and a few other notables in the scientific world. Owen, the zoologist, was in the chair—a grand, tall, broad, truly leonine man, combining dignity with good-humour, which is not easy. I sang two songs and smoked two cigars, and made myself agreeable considerably to the gratification of the old Adam, who also in one sense has his rights. James Martineau has been living up at Braemar for two months, and preached last Sunday forenoon in this place. Of course I did not miss the opportunity of seeing what small account the Holy Spirit takes of our petty orthodoxies and heterodoxies, and verily I was rewarded! Such a sermon, so commanding, so comprehensive, so profound, so original, and as a whole so effective, I have seldom heard. It was directed to the men of science especially, showing how the idea of a mere God of natural laws is insufficient to satisfy the cry of the human heart.

Before returning to Edinburgh the Professor made a short excursion to Elgin, to see some sandstone beds from which crocodiles had been unearthed where fishes were expected.

Messrs Sutherland & Knox issued the 'Lyrical Poems' in December. They formed a collection to which many years had made contribution, and he took warrant for their publication from Goethe's example :—

"What stood in time and space asunder,
Each born in its appointed land,
Are gathered now, one cover under,
And placed in one kind reader's hand."

The volume was dedicated to Dr Guthrie, its first poems being memories of Scottish Covenanters, of whom the Doctor wrote:—

You have done justice, grandly done, to a body of men of genuine piety, and true, enlightened, and staunch patriotism. I would like to read the pieces sacred to the memory of our martyrs with a thousand or two of leal Scotch men and women for my hearers,—how one could move and melt and fire them!

A volley of reviews for and against the poems but little disturbed his equanimity. They need not be recalled, but worthy of quotation are some of the letters, which either acknowledged the cheerful spirit of his book or criticised its style. The most interesting of these may be given in full. The date is January 7, 1860:—

My dear Sir,—For the last few days I have been interesting myself in the Poems you have been so good as to send me, and the sense they have given me of our agreement in many points of opinion and feeling has heightened the value which your words of sympathy already had for me when I first read them on New Year's morning. That generous prompting which made you write the words will make you glad to know that they were like a draught of courage and strength to me. It is *not* so with all praise, but only with that which shows that one's intention has been thoroughly understood; and your praise is of this kind. Without such encouragement now and then, it would be a much harder task to keep oneself clear of the petty influences that come from the echoes of journalistic and club life—nay, even from the reflection that popular success is hardly a test until the second generation.

To have helped me in this way will, I know, be a satisfaction to the writer of that golden "Advice to a favourite Student," and it will not less be a remembered ground of deep obligation by

The Author of 'Adam Bede.'

A few lines from Dr Whewell's letter of January 9 are worth quoting:—

I much like the "Hymn to Helios." It has many very good hexameters, and would have had more if you had written it with a full belief in your English Hexameter. The verse is, when well written,

quite as perfect as any other English verse; and it is only the mistakes of pedants which have prevented the English public from seeing this. The reasons why I think that you have in this case written it carelessly are such as these: you have many, far too many, spondaic verses, which should be avoided, and may surely be avoided in general; and you have one verse with a dactyl at the end — Theology — a shocking barbarism. Excuse my criticisms—*ed io anche*—I too am a hexametrist,—and believe me, yours very truly,

W. WHEWELL.

The Poems are loosely parcelled together into five books, labelled classically, with regard, not always obvious, to their contents. Book I. places eleven poems on the Covenanters under the protection of *Clio;* amongst them is the spirited song of "Jenny Geddes" already mentioned. Book II., with *Polyhymnia* as the guardian Muse, contains "Advice to a favourite Student," "The Sabbath-day," "Moments," and "Trust in God," which, from a varied assortment, rise into distinction, although more because their spirit aspires than because their form attains. *Erato* presides over a number of love-songs, whose Doras and Fannys and Janets are vigorously courted in strains too rollicking to be dangerous. *Euterpe* takes charge of a sturdy squad, whose sentiments are robust, but scarcely poetical, and amongst which "The Working Man's Song" is neither good nor true nor beautiful. No sensible working man understands the term "gentleman" in so false and froward a sense. Book V. celebrates, under the title *Camena*, certain hymns, songs, elegies, and epigrams in Latin.

It seems to have been in this year that Professor Blackie was first introduced to Mr Gladstone. The meeting took place in Dr Guthrie's vestry at the close of a Sunday afternoon's service; but the acquaintance was confirmed, at the Chancellor of the Exchequer's own desire, by a conversation over breakfast on the following Tuesday morning, when

Dean Ramsay was host, and when the subject of interest common to both was Homer.

In March he was in correspondence with Professor Ritschl of Bonn, for whom he was able to secure three volumes of Sir Walter Scott's works missing from the University library there. By the end of the session he was worn out with fatigue, and went to Moor Park for rest. He wrote on arrival: "The journey was stupid, no smallest lisping of the Muse to fill the dull vacancy." Dr Lane was on the eve of removing his establishment to Sudbrooke Park, and there his patient paid him a second visit in July, after a stay of some weeks in London. A letter to Mrs Blackie gives some interesting details of his doings at Richmond:—

I rambled about the Park all yesterday forenoon with Darwin on the Origin of Species in my hand, meditating to get at the source of the unhappy divorce between science and religion which everywhere meets one nowadays, and which, I begin to suspect, is, as in so many other cases, to be looked on as a reaction against the one-sidedness of the orthodox view of creation as a thing done once for all by a magical fiat, after which the Creator retires from the scene. But I need not theologise with you.

Yesterday I dined with Lord Russell, *alias* "Finality John," at 2.30 o'clock, in a very delightful and easy style. He has a gift of Pembroke Lodge, on the ridge of the high ground just above our meadows, from the Queen, and lives there in elegant cottage style; for the place, though full of beauty, is quite small and unpretending. It commands from every point the most magnificent views of English greenery. We dined in a little room painted with trellis and green leaves, with open window, and looking out, or rather walking out, into the rich grass and trees amid which the house lies embosomed. The new Earl is a little smiling mannie. The son (Lord Amberley) you know. He was very attentive to me, and seems to have some wise thoughts in his noddle. I owe two things to him not at all to be despised. He taught me a new game called croquet, and he gave me the new sensation of playing at a game on Sunday, doing what to our Scottish conscience should appear a sin. The dinner was quite quiet, not above eight or ten altogether—and

a few visitors popped in afterwards. After dinner we walked into the other room and out into the garden, and then made up a small knot round a table in the open air and took tea about half-past five. Among the party was Lord Dufferin, a tall, lithe, smiling, dexterous, agreeable, and gentlemanly fellow. We had also the Italian and French Ambassadors, with whom Lord John walked up and down among the trees.

I must off on Thursday morning and direct for the Isle of Wight.

There are indications of an intended visit to Alfred Tennyson, hindered by the poet's absence from home.

He was in Edinburgh at the end of September, and was in correspondence with Sir Roderick Murchison about the geology of Greece and the contiguous northern land.

In the inaugural lecture of the next session we find him leaping the academical fence and foisting in the subject of the Highland clearances, a proof that it lay close to his mind. The lecture, on its proper ground, was occupied with modern Greek, its heredity, its corruption by Albanian, Italian, and Turkish, and its effort in literature to revert to the purity of the mother language.

The closing week of November brought the sad news of Baron Bunsen's death, after an illness which lasted for several months and involved much suffering. He died without finishing his People's Bible, but no man ever left behind him the memory of a more fully perfected life, lived in the constant sense of the Divine presence, in untiring love of men, in reverent fulfilment of all duty.

It is impossible to give a detailed account of all Professor Blackie's activities during these years. His life had become a full and tranquil stream, of whose chief currents record may be maintained, whose depth and breadth can be indicated, but not minutely gauged and stated. During his absence in the summer of 1860 his wife had taken charge of "flitting" their belongings from Castle Street to 24 Hill Street, his Edinburgh home till

1882. The house suited him for many reasons, its main advantage being the quiet of a narrow street undisturbed by traffic. The close neighbourhood of Professor and Mrs Lorimer and of the Sterlings commended the removal to Mrs Blackie, whose touch converted the dull house into a home of rare beauty and fitness. Old friends must still remember the charm with which she endowed her dwelling, each appointment seeming born in its proper place, and the whole giving an impression of harmony, variety, and comfort almost unique in those days of degenerate upholstery.

The dining-room was walled with books, for a large sum was yearly spent upon their acquisition, and they overflowed into corridors and bed-rooms. This room served a double use, and was study as well as dining-room. It opened into Mrs Blackie's domain, whose walls were panelled in ivory and gold, with Greek mottoes for its cornice, and with dark crimson hangings and couches—a long, low room, full of associations to all who knew it and its treasures. Its magnet was the hostess, whose gifts were in no way second to her husband's, but on whom the blight of self-distrust, of a modesty which underrated all that she did, had settled from her youth upwards. It was perhaps indwelling, but it had been fostered in childhood by the severity of Calvinistic influences. The friends who have survived can well remember her intuition, her responsive sympathy, her originality, her gift in language, her capacity for quick and sure apprehension of all she read, with unhesitating appreciation or swift condemnation of matter, manner, or both, her singular attractiveness compounded of all these things, and of a certain personal spell woven by eyes and voice and rapid movements, and which was emphasised by the full and flowing folds of her dress, silken or velvet or

woollen. She followed fashion enough to pacify opinion, but stopped short of restraint and deformity.

The first years of their stay in this new home were signalised by an upheaval of hospitable inclinations on the part of the Professor. The spare rooms were seldom empty, and dinner-party followed dinner-party during the winter. We can only cast a backward glance upon these bygone recreations. The number of guests never exceeded ten; their names were those of the friends of years: artists, professors, "Rab," certain genial divines, some humorous or melodious limb of the law, the confraternity of poets, and various "elect ladies," were on the inner list; but wanderers from the scientific world of London, like Professor Huxley, or from over the water, men of other race and eke of other colour, gave the whet of occasional novelty. The cooking was of high repute. The dinner hour had grown belated in Edinburgh. It had moved slowly round the household clock from twelve to four, where a generation manfully stayed its course; but now it bounded forward in half-hour leaps, and fixed itself for a time at six o'clock. There the Professor decreed that it should stop, and although it tottered on to bed-time in the idle west, he maintained his point in Hill Street. This gave him a long and fruitful evening. At eight o'clock the drawing-room was filled with visitors, chosen friends of the house, who sought its pleasant ingle. Amongst them were many young people, nieces and nephews, whom the atmosphere of varied talk braced into effort after higher culture. Ladies predominated, but they were such as were worthy of a majority. Miss Lucy Cumming, Miss Bird and her sister, Miss Chambers, Miss Amelia Paton, Miss Fanny Stoddart, represent but a tithe of the gifted circle whose members—cloaked and hooded—flitted along to Hill Street, on many a winter evening, to find warmth

and welcome there. In the other room the Professor slept peacefully in his chair till the kettle boiled, and then in loose student's robe and wide-brimmed hat, worn for his eyes' sake, he made his entry with a crackling discharge of quips and compliments for the tea-drinkers.

Nothing was more congenial to him than this interval of fireside laughter, and yet when it was over he returned to his work for two long hours, often to spend them in coaching a student too poor to pay for help and too zealous to escape his kind teacher's interest. At eleven o'clock he sat down to the piano, a practice with which he kept unbroken faith all the years of his maturer life. For half an hour he strummed with difficulty, searching the chords of old and new psalm-tunes, and patiently repeating the phrases, more often wrong than right, which he picked out of the keys. Sometimes a visitor with a soul for old Covenanting tunes helped him a little with her voice, but he was best pleased to hunt them out himself. Strange sounds assailed the ears of unwonted sleepers in the house, sounds which assorted with no known melody, until weeks of discord had gone by, when the chords would be marshalled into approaching order, and at prayers next morning the psalm or paraphrase would be sung to the newly captured air. He led the singing himself, and had ten or twelve favourite psalms.

There were blanks by this time in the circle of his relatives. Old Mr Blackie died in the summer of 1856; Mr Wyld of Gilston was gone, and now Mrs Wyld followed her husband. Mrs Blackie's sister, Miss Augusta Wyld, joined them in their Hill Street home, and made one of the family for some years.

CHAPTER XIV.

HOMER.

1861–1866.

It seems to have been in August 1861 that Professor Blackie, on his way from Sudbrooke to Southsea, stopped at Winchfield and tramped over the brown heath to Eversley, to visit Kingsley.

At half-past seven I found myself before the dear, rustic, old English rectory, gracefully shaded by acacias and Scotch firs; and entering in by the open door of the dining-room, found the rector sitting alone over the remains of his dinner in a down-bent musing way. On my apparition, up he started immediately, and with an English shake of the hand called out "Blackie!" I sat down and helped him to drain a bottle of Burgundy. He had been out fishing all day, and was glowing in face like a tropical copper sky. He was extremely agreeable all evening, and swung in a Manilla grass hammock which stretched across his study, in a style of the most complete *négligé*. His brother Henry came in about half-past eight, and we all smoked, and drank tea, and talked, and went early to bed. My room was low, with rafters in the old style, straw carpets, and engravings of the Madonna on the walls. I slept soundly; and next morning we had a bevy of bright-faced daughters at breakfast, with excellent bacon, fruit, and Devonshire cream. At ten I bolted back to the train.

Lectures on "Education," on "Ancient and Modern Poetry," articles for 'Macmillan's' and other magazines,

a paper on "Athens" for the 'Daily Review,' supplemented his work on Homer and his academical duties that year and the next. He spent May 1862 in London, and the summer months were divided between Methven, Dollar, and Lowland rambles. In October he paid Sheriff Glassford Bell a visit, and cemented his acquaintance with Dr Norman Macleod, who wrote in humorous allusion to Dr Guthrie's eloquence:—

> I have neither grace nor rhetoric, sunsets nor sailors, wounded soldiers nor drunken mothers, Homerics nor *Bucolics*, but plain things in plain English to plain people. I utterly hate all critics; they are almost as great infidels as the clergy. So leave me alone with my mechanics, in Heaven with prose! But I should like to hear your poetry and to see your phiz. I am engaged every Monday night from eight till ten in my church singing with 300 of my people. But could you lunch with me on Monday at one sharp? Say Yes and "Yir a Gintleman."

The winter which followed was active and varied as usual, but it brought him a touch of bronchitis. This short illness gave him leisure for a study of the German influence on English literature, his reflections upon which took the form of a lecture. It was necessary to find subjects for the lectures which were demanded from him throughout Scotland—his modes of attack, his excellent common-sense, his effervescence of jocular personalities provoked by immediate conditions, making his appearance on provincial platforms especially welcome. But the habit of these appearances into which he fell—at first from good-nature and afterwards from enjoyment—had a deteriorating influence upon his treatment of the matters, literary, political, and historical, on which he dwelt. He got, from the enthusiastic welcome accorded him, a fixed impression that his meditations upon all subjects were of value, and this generated a tendency to lecture without sufficient concentration, trusting to a buoyant flow of irrelevant allusions,

of nimble asides, of bold and uncompromising digressions, to sustain the credit of his prelection.

Rustic audiences delighted in the crackle of platform squibs, were contented with a small modicum of opinion which generally represented their own, were pleased with his good looks and hilarity, responded to his patriotism, and enjoyed his prejudices. These seldom wrung the withers of the middle-class Scot, who went home with a sense of being roused and entertained, flattered and counselled, and scarcely asked himself whether he had been enlightened. This was, however, a decadence from the rigorous industry and serious conscientiousness which were the hall-marks of his earlier work, and which still distinguished all his more important undertakings. No doubt this popular lecturing, of which these years were full, relieved him from the strain of strenuous study, gave him the movement and variety which were as needful to him as air, and freshened him with the breeze of social intercourse and popularity.

When the session was over, the Blackies, joined by Miss Fanny Stoddart, went to the Highlands in May 1863. They took up their quarters at Kinlochewe, in the comfortable little inn at the head of Loch Maree. There a sprained ankle kept Miss Stoddart a prisoner for some weeks, and the proposed excursion to Skye fell to the Professor's lonely lot. It was at Kinlochewe that his ear was opened to the philological importance of Gaelic. The postladdie was waiting for letters at the inn door, and holding his pony by the bridle. "What is the Gaelic for horse?" asked the Professor, as he handed him a packet for the post. "*Each*," said the boy, and the sound set his questioner's mind aworking. Surely this was first cousin to *equus*, and was worthy of further research. And so germinated his interest in Gaelic, which grew to such purpose

in after years. Later they settled in Oban for a couple of months, enchanted with the beauty of its bay and its marvellous sunsets. The little town had waxed, and modest lodgings were available, but it was still next neighbour to sweet solitude, and its heights were undefiled. The burnet rose perfumed seaward shelves of grass; the bogbean filled damp corners of the pastures; ferns fringed the old stone walls; in the niches by the rocks rose the slim purple butterwort. On the moors tottered and stumbled the baby peewits, and overhead from time to time there wheeled a golden eagle.

A first vague longing for a summer home was born in those July rambles along the Sound of Kerrera. One evening Miss Stoddart pointed to a little plateau which stretched between cliff and upland, "There!" she said; "build your cottage there."

Miss Bird and her sister, beloved in the islands, and Mr Hutcheson, the "Admiral of the West," were at Oban too that year, and piloted by them, they grew familiar with the beauty in which the town was set as in a ring.

An article on "Pulpit Eloquence" for the 'Musæum' occupied the Professor's leisure in October, and drew an appreciative letter from Dr Robert Lee. But that true friend commented wisely on the scene which the inaugural lecture of November excited in the Greek class-room:—

> If you put a large audience, especially a youthful audience, into roars of laughter in the beginning, it is almost impossible afterwards to get them to listen to anything sober and didactic. On the whole, I cannot help thinking that you do yourself an injustice by these opening lectures. Many hear them who never hear your steady, sober, and practical proceeding in your everyday work, and go away with an impression which is equally false and pernicious. None of the rest of us invite such gatherings—why do you?

Boyhood in him survived its proper term, and its in-

calculable impulses, noisy, impish, laughter-loving, inconsiderate, checkered his character as a professor and as a lecturer. The presence of a motley audience, amongst whom were the grave and sensitive as well as the young and provocative, was like a match to these lines of explosives which veined the seriousness known best to his household. Gentle, tender, unselfish, tranquil, and wise at home, the intervention of a stranger transformed him into an excited, reckless, and startling being, and unfortunately many who saw him in a phase which themselves provoked, went away with an indelible impression as untrue as had been his behaviour. Only his friends could both tolerate and enjoy these extravagances, knowing through what sound and lovable reality they bubbled up into momentary effervescence.

On the 22d and 26th of April 1864 he lectured to the Royal Institution of London on Lycurgus and the Spartan laws. He wrote from Dr Hodgson's house in St John's Wood, where he stayed during this epoch, to Mrs Blackie :—

The first London lecture is over, as comfortably as if it had been an address to my own students. Wilson and Christison were there to see how their colleague behaved. Wilson said there was no impropriety. I saw hosts of friends—the Archers, Mrs Gregory, the Kinglakes, John Stuart Glennie, Dr Priestley, Dallas, &c. I had some pleasant talk with Faraday and Bence Jones, a fine jolly Englishman. But the greatest luck was the presence of Bishop Thirlwall, who is on my side as against Grote, and who would be delighted to hear his old-fashioned sensible view of the Spartan agrarian laws vindicated against the brilliant novelties of a sceptical generation.

On the 25th he met Mr Herbert Spencer, not yet solemnised into his *rôle* of a philosophical Atlas, but the author of a series of essays on education in varied aspects, of whom great things were expected.

He is quiet and unassuming [wrote the Professor], and most clear, accurate, and well-adjusted in his expressions,—a very lovable sort of man, logical without being angular. Yesterday, my second lecture went off with greater swing than the first. At all events, the subject was more interesting and more popular. The job is done. I made no great blunder, and the people seemed marvellously pleased. Only one gentleman was so offended by the eulogy that I made of war—as according to the order of Providence a great school of manhood—that he lifted up his voice openly against my doctrine and then walked out.

A very interesting habit was inaugurated during this visit to London. He wrote on May 5th:—

Yesterday I breakfasted with Gladstone in his Carleton Terrace house, just next door to where I so often enjoyed the sunlight of dear old Bunsen's countenance. Gladstone was extremely agreeable, easy, cheerful, and talkative, and not at all so wiry and dark as his photographs represent him. Present were his fair lady and daughter, Whewell of Trinity and his lady, before whom I exploded emphatically about the absurdity of English pronunciation of Greek and Latin, Gladstone being distinctly on my side, and the Cambridge don more than half. I told him roundly that the English schoolmasters were as hard-hided as a rhinoceros, and utterly impenetrable to reason, nature, and common-sense. The Lord Advocate, who was also present, told me he was perfectly delighted with the manner in which I walked round about the mighty Cambridge don I did not mean to do anything of the kind; but of all exhibitions of poor, pretentious humanity, donnism is to me the most odious, so there was no harm done. I am sure I was not impertinent, only decidedly and distinctly explosive.

A dinner with Kinglake, a visit to the Dobells, a talk with Thirlwall on early Greek history—his memory of which was troubled by the misgiving that in the heat of argument he had put his hand in friendly fashion upon the episcopal knee—a call upon Grote, and a supper at Covent Garden Club, where he met a group of literary men perhaps less dignified and more entertaining, made up the sum of new impressions during this eventful month in London.

On May 10th he wrote from Farringford, Freshwater :—

As soon as my London engagements were satisfied, I came down here. After half an hour's sail, quarter of an hour's drive brought me to this quiet and truly English little mansion. The lady of the house received me in the most gentle, gracious manner. She is of the genuine, sweet-blooded, sweet-voiced English style, dressed in black and white, loose-flowing. By this time it was five o'clock. The poet [Tennyson] came down-stairs from a hot bath which he had just been taking, quite in an easy unaffected style; a certain slow heaviness of motion belongs essentially to his character, and contrasts strikingly with the alert quickness and sinewy energy of Kingsley; head Jovian, eye dark, pale face, black flowing locks, like a Spanish ship-captain or a captain of Italian brigands,—something not at all common and not the least English. We dined, talked, and smoked together, and got on admirably. He reads Greek readily, and has been translating bits of Homer lately in blank verse. This morning after breakfast we walked about, inspecting the beauties of the park and adjacent village; having a fine look-out through the trees to the sea both on the north and the south side of the island; quite an English scene—water, wood, and softly rounded green hills.

Long after, in his old age, the Professor spoke of this visit with a reverence very unusual to him in allusion to his contemporaries, and a few flowers gathered in Tennyson's garden were carefully pressed and affixed to his copy of "In Memoriam."

Some weeks of autumn were spent in the West Highlands, and Oban began to weave meshes of association about them. The dream of a summer home by its bay grew familiar, and crept into their plans for the future as a cherished possibility, which was emboldened by the hearty welcome which it received in the place, by the smoothing away of obstacles, and by the discovery that the very plateau which suggested the dream was to be had for a building site. When they returned to Edinburgh it was with all the information needed for decision, and they had but to give the alternative freedom of movement its

due weight. The Professor was strongly attracted by the scheme of a Highland home. There were mighty bens to be topped; there were breezy moors and heather-scented downs over which to stride in daily converse with the Muse; there were seas and islands for exploration; there were people in every glen who spoke a language of ancient origin, which bore the very features of its ancestral kinship millenniums back. Here was matter for contemplation, for study, for emotion, for new ventures in human intercourse, for a fresh world into which to withdraw when spring hung her scented tassels on the larch. Of all these lures the most powerful was the Gaelic language.

For Mrs Blackie the thought of a home by the blue sound, which should look over to the purple hills of Mull and Morven, a place of rest from the wearisome round of winter duties,—

> "A resting-place from worries,
> Door bells, dinners, notes, and hurries,"—

had become a craving. There was only one deterrent consideration. If they built this cottage by the sea their wings would be clipped, and they must forbear variety. Already Mrs Blackie's health had begun to give way, and she had ceased to accept the invitations which were showered upon her husband and herself. It was the rule for him, justified by rare exception, to dine out alone. Her courage was daunted by illness into desire for rest. But she had still stores of energy, which found vent within her house in active hospitality. The Professor found only evening visitors convenient while he was engrossed with the work of the session, with his lectures and Homeric studies, but welcomed the prospect of a country home dedicated to guests. Deliberation swayed to the plan of a cottage at Oban; and their income, now

increased from sources outside the emoluments of the chair, had left a margin, saved during several years, which sufficed for the cost of building.

That autumn, when the session began, his inaugural lecture included—in its survey of philological topics—a special discourse on Gaelic as important to the study of language. This was fully reported, and drew from many educated Highlanders a warm acknowledgment. He had only begun to study Gaelic; but already its beauty, its poetic capabilities, its kinship to Sanscrit, Greek, and Latin, convinced him of the recklessness of letting the language perish. Amongst those who responded to his rally was Mr David Hutcheson, who sent the Professor a free pass for the year 1865 in all his West Highland steamers, reiterating the hope that Oban might soon claim him as a townsman. But the plan could not be immediately put into execution. There was first of all the publication of 'Homer' to be arranged. He was in correspondence with Mr Theodore Martin, Mr Dallas, and Dr John Carlyle on the subject. All three urged on him the issue of his work by Murray, or failing that eminent publisher, by an Edinburgh firm. The manuscript had attained colossal proportions. In addition to three volumes of translation and notes, there was an introductory volume of Dissertations, ten in number, on the whole subject of the personal Homer, the Epic Cycle, the minstrel and epic artist, the authenticity of the text, and the various forms of translation. He decided to go to London and interview the publishers himself. A visit from the Henry Bunsens delayed him at home till the middle of May 1865, when he accepted an invitation to stay with Mr and Mrs James Archer in Phillimore Gardens until his quest should be ended. Mr Dallas and Mr Martin introduced him to Messrs Longman, and his old acquaintance with the Mac-

millans gave him an opportunity to offer them his 'Homer' for publication. But both of these firms declined the risk attached to so bulky a production. Mr Grote gave him a letter to Murray which procured him an interview, and he was asked to forward parts of both the introductory volume and of the translation for decision. This gave him courage to enjoy the remainder of his stay in town, which formed, as usual, a lively record of dinners and social successes. At home with artists, whose society he always preferred to that of scholars, he enjoyed meeting and visiting the Faeds, Erskine Nicol, Spanish Phillip, and others of the genial and natural confraternity.

On his way home he spent a few days at Cambridge; but the absence of the Grecians whom he wished to consult was disappointing, and but for an encounter with the Miss Thackerays and Paley, and for the kind attentions of Mr Clark and Mr Aldis Wright, his halt would have proved unprofitable.

In Edinburgh, pending Murray's decision, he occupied himself with correspondence on the pronunciation of Greek, provoked by letters sent earlier in the year to both the 'Times' and the 'Scotsman.' But towards the end of June he was invited to be one of the examiners at the Inverness Academy, and received an honourable welcome from the local authorities. While there he went out to Blackhills, near Elgin, to see his colleague, Professor Aytoun, who was then dying, although he cheered up at sight of an old friend, and gave no sign of the approaching end. In August 1865 Mrs Aytoun wrote :—

You were the last of his Edinburgh friends to see him, and I am sure you could have had little idea that it was for the last time. Your visit was a real pleasure to him; he thought it so kind of you to come so far out of your way to pay it. And he had so much fellow-feeling for all his colleagues that the sight of one of them cheered him.

The 8th of July brought him Mr Murray's letter declining to publish 'Homer' on the ground of its bulk. A suggestion that the Dissertations might be issued without the translation was opposed to the Professor's aim, which it did not occur to him to modify. The blow was smart. Every London publisher of standing to whom he applied refused the enterprise, and his hope of impressive issue was checked. Doubtless the appearance of Lord Derby's 'Homer' two years earlier had forestalled what popular demand existed for a new translation. The classical readers to whom his manuscript had been submitted were averse to the ambling pace of his ballad measure, as unsuited to express the majestic march of the Homeric line. But it was just to that comfortable amble that he pinned his faith. His horizon was now narrowed to Scotland, and he proposed the publication to Messrs Edmonston & Douglas, who undertook it on the condition that they should be guaranteed against loss.

His acceptance of this disappointment illustrates one of the most beautiful features in a very lovable character. Its spirit is breathed in the closing lines of the Dissertations, which run:—

> Whether or not I shall be judged to have made any thankworthy contribution to the translated literature of my country, the man who has spent twelve years of honest toil in the study of such an author as Homer has already received the better half of his reward.

No words of those who knew him well could better portray his constant attitude towards work and relatively towards success. The superficial effusive enjoyment of popularity, which led observers to credit him with vanity, was but the honest expression of what little vanity he had. At heart no man was ever more modest, was ever less tormented by over-estimate of himself, was ever more free

from wounded egotism. He worked for work's sake, and kept his mind in sound activity, his disposition in love and tolerance toward all men. If rare invective whetted his sallies, it was against those only who would have cramped the flow and ebb of human thought into the dull ditch of their own dogmatism, never against those who depreciated himself.

A week after he received Mr Murray's letter he was at Broughton in Peebles, climbing hills, singing his new songs, exploring the Tweed to its source, making Mossfennan ring with sympathetic laughter.

'Homer' disposed of for the nonce, he and Mrs Blackie started for the Highlands in August. They went to Oban, where the site for their house had been secured. A walk of half a mile from the town round the southern horn of the bay led by the Sound of Kerrera to a cliff from whose brow retired a green and sheltered plateau. A bank led up to it on the townward side, flanked by a rocky gorge down which rattled a burn. The bank was flattened out below into a triangular field, where a mill utilised the stream. This field was unattainable, but the bank and the plateau and a bit of the rolling upland at its back were secured. The plan had outgrown its first projection, and promised a comfortable turreted house, whose many bedrooms were to express unstinted welcome. The architect was Mrs Blackie, who achieved a complete and symmetrical design, and their stay was much engrossed with all the details of its execution. Larches and firs were set where the ground was exposed, the bank was laid out in grassy terraces, and shrubs which sea-air fosters were planted at every point of vantage. When all was set agoing they went to Mull, an island always magnetic to the Professor.

They returned to Edinburgh to the growing interest of Carlyle's installation as Lord Rector of the University.

DEAR BLACKIE [Carlyle wrote on November 13],—I am thinking seriously about the assessorship; also about studying the Installation speech, if that be at all feasible. Assist me in that if you humanly can! From Sir D. Brewster I have a note, brief as your own and touching upon the same topics. Is that to be the commencement to me of this fine Dignity; or am I to expect something more formally official?

The world knows all the details of that installation now, and of the tragedy so soon to overshadow its chief actor.

The proofs of the Dissertations and the translation were issuing from the press. Professor Blackie sent copies to Dr George MacDonald, to Theodore Martin, to Dr Donaldson, and to Sheriff Trotter at Dumfries, asking for ample criticism. From these friends he received both excellent amendments and comments upon the looseness of his versification, on the ground of which he corrected many lines, and these obligations he has recorded in his preface. Of them all Sheriff Trotter seems to have spoken most plainly, and to have effected the largest number of corrections, but to Dr Donaldson's fine scholarship he owed a thorough revisal of the notes. The winter was occupied with proof-correcting; and a correspondence with Mr Scaramanga points to a vigorous revival of the Hellenic Society, for the further hellenisation of whose members he ordered some dozens of various Greek wines.

The Baroness Bunsen had begged him to translate for her a number of poems by her husband, which were the expression of strong feeling at different crises of Bunsen's life, and he was able to return them to her in English dress at Christmas-time.

In January 1866 he was much encouraged by a letter from Mr Theodore Martin, with an opinion on the Dissertations, which had been sent to him in proof-sheets :—

I feel confident that the book will be welcome to all who care about good literature, be they scholars or no. I think your chapter on the Wolfian theory masterly.

Another interest of the month was the impeachment of Dr Norman Macleod by the Judaic party in the Scottish Church, and a very natural outburst of sympathy reached the culprit at Osborne, from which dignified sanctuary he responded :—

I am in a sort of way acknowledging the kind letters sent to me during this time of, let me frankly confess it, severe trial to me. I thank you very cordially for yours. God bless you for it! A day of freedom is coming—I could die to usher it sooner in by an hour. As I write I see the white houses of Portsmouth and the big black ships like Leviathans afloat, but my heart's in the Highlands. Hurrah! there screams the bagpipe! Ross, bless him, is pouring forth his notes like the cries of sea-birds in a storm. I wish I saw Drs Muir, Gibson, and company dancing the Reel of Hoolachan. It would humanise them more than all the presbyteries in Scotland. I begin to dislike the clergy! Heaven forgive me!—I suppose there *is* some wicked inspiration in me.

The correcting of 'Homer' lasted through the session and occupied the summer months. Early in August they returned to Oban. Altnacraig was nearly finished, and had received its name from the burn which dashed down its rocky glen. All Mrs Blackie's art was given to its plenishing; and already the promise of a home with comfort and beauty for twin presences smiled upon its owners. While her orders were in execution, they made a Hebridean tour, first taking Mull, where they paid Dr Cumming a visit at the "*Parva domus*," abode of "*magna quies*."

The Constables were at Greshornish, and attracted them thither, so that the royal Cuchullins in sunset purple and gold became familiar to them. When they returned to

Oban, it was to take possession of their Highland home. Miss Henrietta Bird was the welcoming bard:—

"Thus at last hath the ideal
On this rock become the real,
Born of bright imagination,
Outlined forth by contemplation,
Reared in fancies vague.
Now at last in fair expansion
Standeth it,—a goodly mansion.
Blessings on its walls and towers,
On its gardens and its bowers,
Beauteous Altnacraig!"

One of its towers was the Professor's own domain, and was soon lined with books and supplied with writing-table and easy-chairs. Here he could croon over Gaelic and shout over Greek, and fill his soul with thankful adoration, when he gazed from the window over green Kerrera and the Sound to the dreamy Bens of Mull. Down-stairs three sitting-rooms, all looking to the sea, opened one into the other, and breathed warmth, comfort, home in every nook. The road, which ran below, was lost to sight, but voices and laughter reached the loungers on the heather-cushioned verge of the cliff, and there a seat was set to watch the white yachts as they stole along the Sound, or glided like spectres beyond Kerrera. Through the young firs glowed the crimson sunset, flushing the long vista of waves in Morven Sound. The seat upon the cliff became the trysting-place of hosts and guests at teatime, and on balmy nights they reassembled there, sometimes to look on the moonlit sea, often to waft on high a hymn of praise.

Almost simultaneous with this home-coming was the appearance of the four Homeric volumes. They were dedicated to Professor Welcker at Bonn, to Dr George Finlay at Athens, and to Mr W. G. Clark of Trinity College, Cambridge. The first copies were sent to them,

and to all who had assisted the Professor in correcting the proofs. Mr Robert Horn, Mr David Hutcheson, Mr Duncan M'Laren, Professor Daniel Wilson at Toronto, are conspicuous amongst the friends outside that group of helpful Homerids who received copies.

The aim of the whole undertaking was to exhibit the Homeric Epics to the intelligent readers of our country, so translated and so complemented by treatise and explanation that the lack of Greek might prove no barrier to full enjoyment of their themes. It was therefore to a popular and not to an academical public that Professor Blackie appealed. This aim, so far as he was concerned, was amply fulfilled; but the apathy of a full-fed middle class to the banquets of gods and heroes, its aversion to the lofty survivals of remote ages—an aversion extended to the Bible, as well as to Homer, the Vedas, the Shastras—defeated the better half of an unselfish purpose. Four stout volumes full of however readable matter weighed deterrently on the imagination. The epoch of serials had begun to run its stormy course, and the nation liked its literature cheap. Inevitably the book was bought by men who knew and cared for Greek, and its estimate was decided by the very class for whom it was not written. The class is small, and the sale failed to cover the cost of publication. The Professor lost £200 by the venture, and doubtless most of those writers who devote themselves to classical literature have paid a like penalty for their preference.

The ten dissertations which occupy the first volume are brimming with the interest which inspired their author. No more vivid chapter was ever written than that which deals with the historic personality of Homer. Of the personal Homer he had no manner of doubt. "The Greeks did not forget Homer. He was as living in their memory,

through their whole history, as the person of Robert Burns is in the heart of every true Scot." Wolf and his followers had indeed raised the question, but the "taint of misty negation" was wont to come from Germany on each and every subject of intrinsic evidence. He did not despise the research and the discoveries of Wolf, but he refused his conclusions, for which these discoveries afforded scanty ground. Faith in Homer "rests directly and naturally on the double fact that there exists a great poem, which demands the existence of a great author, and that this authorship has been constantly recognised by the consciousness of the Greek people in the person of Homer."

Having championed the man Homer against all comers, —German heretics and their English proselytes,—he proceeded to make prominent his dramatic methods. These were illustrated by fifteen marks of Epic poetry, such as magnitude, national significance, grandeur of expression, unity, rapidity of movement, the superhuman element, and other cognate and dependent conditions. Homer's acceptance with the Greeks, who reverenced him in a common national sentiment which overbore all tribal feud, admitted him to the highest rank amongst poets for ever, because the Greeks were nothing if not critical, and what they placed above the scathe of criticism cannot be challenged. Homer lasted as the main influence over the best Hellenic mind, and when his loftier theology and his robuster manliness ceased to educate, the doom of Greece was at hand. The preservation of the Homeric text; the interpolations, continuations, and corruptions due to successive generations of Homerids; the various English translations; the choice of rhythm in each,—these occupied the concluding dissertations. In the last Professor Blackie justified his adoption of the ballad-couplet on the ground that the poems were ballads, and

that, transferred from the ballad hexameters of Homer to the ballad measure of the English popular songs, they can best render their character and significance to the English mind.

Coming to that transference, we find a comfortable version of the great epics, sometimes rising to their own candid grandeur, but on the whole more fluent than impressive. It is difficult to acknowledge Homer's supremacy, if the language employed in this translation keenly conveys the original. Only now and then do the epithets satisfy the ear; only now and then do they overtop the level of easy descriptive verse. None the less the series of scenic episodes is well presented, and if robed in less than epic majesty, their heroes condescend the more readily to the sympathies of the general. An impression is left on the mind of too facile execution, and the attention wearies somewhat of the long, low rise and fall of the ballad couplets, varied here and there by prolongation and by triplets. But in spite of a form which depresses the "strong-wing'd music of Homer," making it flag with drooping pinion, the purpose of popularising its subject-matter is fully achieved, and would have been widely recognised had Professor Blackie issued a work more moderate in bulk and cost. Admirable as are the Dissertations, they are swollen with analogies and illustrations sometimes far-fetched, and often amplified at the expense of their argumentative value. Had all these superfluities, these vague reiterations, been eliminated, there would have remained a small volume of the greatest worth, the outcome of rare industry and scholarship, couched in clear and vigorous language, and conveying to every educated reader the very pith and marrow of its subject.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HIGHLANDS AND ISLANDS.

1866–1870.

It was early in November 1866 that, presiding at a meeting of the Working Men's Club, at its Institute in the High Street of Edinburgh, Professor Blackie launched forth into an invective against the Reform Bill, which at that time was in process of incubation, and, charging somewhat unadvisedly down the vistas of "manhood suffrage" and "the ballot," flung a challenge in the faces of their champions. This was reported in the 'Scotsman' of November 12 as follows:—

> If you will appoint a night for a lecture, and set Blackie on the one side, and Bright, or Beales, or Jones, or M'Laren, or the honourable member, the late Lord Advocate, for whom I have a great respect, on the other side,—then with Aristotle in one pocket and Plato in the other, and a great deal of Scotch rummlegumption in the front battery, I think they will find me a sharp customer.

There is little doubt that the gauntlet was a mere rhetorical flourish, and that he expected no knight of reform to pick it up. He did not account himself a politician, and was seldom acquainted with the *pros* and *cons* of party questions. His opinions on these were evolved in the manner which he indicated himself—from classic precedent and his own consciousness. But reck-

less rhetoric in print is apt to rouse a Nemesis. The Scottish National Reform League played the part of the goddess, and inspired Mr Ernest Jones, then known as an able advocate of Manhood Suffrage, to respond to the challenge. The Professor, astounded to find himself the representative of a party, backed by the *optimi*, at whom he was as wont to fling his spear as at their political opponents, wriggled restlessly at first; but the ranks both of supporters and of foes closed round him, and he buckled on his armour in face of the inevitable. Mr Ernest Jones accepted all the terms of the original challenge, genially asking to be enlightened as to the fighting value of "rummlegumption." The Reform League instructed the secretary of the Working Men's Club to make the necessary arrangements, and it was finally settled to engage the Music Hall in George Street for the evenings of the 3d and 4th January 1867, when Democracy should on the first night be handled by the challenger, and on the second be supported by Mr Jones on precisely the same terms of ancient precedent as those used in the attack. Of course this gave an advantage to the first speaker, who could carefully prepare and execute his indictment, while the defence was perforce almost extempore; but Professor Blackie forwarded a copy of his address some days beforehand to Mr Jones, who proved to be a man of fine classical attainments, and to whom the subject in its modern application was fully familiar. At the festival of the "Blackie Brotherhood" Mr Alexander Nicolson sang a prophetic song of the bloodless encounter:—

"And so, when each has talked his span,
And thinks that he has floored his man,
The fight will close where it began,
And so will end the story.

Then here's to Blackie, and long live he
To fight against Democratie;
And may we all be there to see,
And shout in the hour of his glory!
Chorus—Hey, John Bright, are ye talking yet,
And is your tongue awagging yet?
Here's our Blackie will mak mincemeat
Of you and your gang of reformers."

The hall was crowded with an audience eager for the fray. The knights combatant received an enthusiastic welcome, and each applauded the other's address with chivalrous enthusiasm. On the first evening Mr Dun, President of the Working Men's Club, and on the second Mr Duncan M'Laren, occupied the chair.

The Professor sought to establish the inevitable failure of the republican system from the examples of Greece, Rome, Venice, and France,—for the Second Empire was at that date dominant over the betrayed Republic of the last country,—and he pointed to the corruption existing in the political atmosphere of New York in support of his contention. His lecture lasted nearly three hours, and was heard with close attention, marked by vivacious cheering and hissing on the part of the audience. He bore the counter-demonstration with perfect good-humour, retorting at times on his opponents with the gibe that his wisest remarks were best hissed. On the next evening Mr Jones proved easily enough that at all events Greece and Venice reached their culmination under republican rule. The lances clashed briskly, but neither was shivered,—"the fight *did* close where it began."

The Professor's lecture was printed and widely circulated, and it won him a *kudos* amongst Conservatives which rather disconcerted him; for he was a born *franc-tireur*, and had a blushing consciousness of views upon land, upon the crofter question, and on other delicate matters about to

see the light, which would divert the graciousness now radiating towards him.

In April 1867 he spoke on the same subject in Manchester, and Mr Ernest Jones paid him the compliment of attending on the platform, although the meeting was held under the auspices of a Conservative Association. Sad to tell, this courteous and able opponent died not long after.

In the preceding November, Professor Blackie had delivered two lectures on Plato to the members of the Philosophical Institution, and he was invited to give these in London on the platform of the Royal Institution in May 1867. From Manchester he went to town to fulfil this engagement, and took up his quarters with Mr and Mrs Archer, as he had done two years before. But in the meantime his programme had been enlarged by an evening lecture on classical pronunciation in our Universities, with the title "Music of Speech in the Greek and Latin Languages." His listeners on the subject of Platonic Philosophy numbered amongst them the Duke of Argyll, Dr Hodgson, and Dr George MacDonald; but however brilliantly salted, he found the audience unsympathetic. He was confronted "with rows of parchment faces incapable alike of fun or fervour," and he compared their chilling reserve with the lively response to be got from rows of genial Scots in an Edinburgh hall. The evening lecture was delivered on May 3.

With a galaxy of well-dressed ladies in front, I determined to dash into them just as if I had been in my own class-room, and achieved a great success. Gladstone was there, sitting right opposite me, and it was a pleasure to see the severe lines of his face relax into wreathed smiles and expand into diffusive laughter at the manner in which I handled the Oxonians.

The Professor had much to say on a question which had

engaged his interest nearly forty years before, and to bear on which he brought stores of scholarship, reason, and enthusiasm. He was conscious, too, of the indifference in England to the conclusions of a Scottish scholar, even the few accordant voices at Oxford and Cambridge being then apathetic as to practical reform; and this consciousness lent a touch of defiance to his appeal for a common-sense pronunciation. The lecture was printed and disseminated.

When unburdened of these prelections, he gave himself up to social enjoyment dashed with research. On both counts he paid a visit to Harrow, his host there being Mr Farrar, now the Dean of Canterbury; but his hope of class-inspection was checked by the headmaster's *non possumus*. He found the "Harrow Dons a very mild and polished and refined sort of people, and not at all formidable to a Scotch Professor."

After his return to Kensington he

dressed in white-choker pomp, and walked up to the Duke of Argyll's house, where we dined at eight o'clock. The party was small and agreeable: John Bright, Dr M'Cosh, and Lord and Lady Amberley were the most interesting constituents. It is impossible to see Bright without liking him. There was excellent conversation after dinner about the prospects of the negroes, the female vote, Gladstone, Spurgeon, and what not. But of all, nothing pleased me so much as Lady Amberley, a piece of nature and grace combined.

The Theodore Martins introduced him to Mr Robert Browning, and he described his first call as follows:—

From Lord Strangford I shot across to Browning the poet. He received me with the greatest frankness, having known me of old from the Æschylean correspondence I had with his wife. He showed me her Greek books all written over with commentary. He is an active, soldier-like, direct man, a contrast to the meditative ponderosity of Tennyson. The person and attitude in each case is a perfect index to the movement of the poetry. He has a tame owl with black staring eyes, which jumps about the room, and amused

me very much. He told me all about his new poem, on which he has been working for years.

A short visit to Oxford divided his term in London, and there he added to his acquaintances the late Dr Appleton, Fellow of St John's, and afterwards editor of the 'Academy.'

We retired to his rooms after dinner, when I had an opportunity of hearing how ingeniously these gentlemen can justify the Athanasian Creed and other dogmatic pedantries.

From the argument he fled at last, leaving on his host the impression that he was affronted at the turn which it had taken. A letter followed him to London, in which Dr Appleton explained:—

I was afraid that you thought we were trying to entangle you in an Oxford word-juggle; and that, like the lion, you thought it best to burst the cords at once and be gone. So far as my opinion goes, the subjects upon which we were talking were far too important to allow of being treated in a sophistical way. At the same time, I am not a Ritualist, nor a Romaniser, nor an extreme Anglican. I am, like you, a Protestant; but it appears to me that Protestantism, as a point of view, is unintelligible unless we regard the consolidation of doctrine and discipline under the auspices of Rome as its necessary and therefore Providential antecedent.

This to Professor Blackie!

The Rector of Lincoln College and Professor Max Müller furnished fresh and sympathetic talk, and after four days' hearty hospitality from the much-abused Oxford Dons, he returned to town. A visit to Norwich exhausted his southern programme, and at the end of May he joined his wife at Altnacraig. Here a letter reached him from Dr George Finlay, from which some sentences are worth quoting:—

I have found, as I advanced in reading the 'Iliad,' that your metre gained on me, and I am now a convert to your measure. You have more carats of pure Homeric gold than your predecessor Pope, but

you have used red copper to work your metal, and by using silver as the alloy he makes a good show, and can put in more of the inferior material and look genuine. Your work is a great one, and exhausts the inquiry of Homer, in Homer.

The summer passed in hearty enjoyment of his Highland retreat, which already was become a place of pilgrimage for friendly pedestrians. He dislodged Greek and University reform from their accustomed niches, and refreshed his mind with the study of Gaelic and with the interest which his rambles in all directions stimulated in the names of places. The pleasant element of boy life was added now to the household, for he and Mrs Blackie had adopted Alexander Blackie, the son of his step-brother Gregory, whom in Göttingen days he had dubbed "the Pope."

The ample kith and kin of Wylds and Blackies contributed troops of guests all summer, and from the kith and kin of election came choice spirits, one by one, to season the table-talk with variety. But when the heats of August gave place to the mellow September weather, the impulse to movement stirred in him, and he started by steamer for Ballachulish. He had unwisely chosen a pair of boots on grounds of comfort, without due inspection of their soles. They lasted while he walked up Glencoe to King's House. Here he stayed over Sunday, and Monday being bright and clear, he determined to climb the Buchaillmore. Local opinion was against the adventure, and the landlord refused to supply him with a guide. The Ben was in the hands of the Sassenach deer-stalkers, and an interdict was upon it. But the Professor, if he feared God, certainly regarded not man, so, with the wonted stick in hand and a parting intimation to the gamekeeper that his name was John Stuart Blackie, and that he would answer in the Court of Session for his doings, he started for the top and won a cloudless view. Next day he climbed the Devil's Stair-

case to Kinloch-Leven, calling by the way on Campbell of Monzie, who entertained him with true Highland hospitality, and upon whose green home amongst the moors he was delivered of a sonnet.

Arrived at Fort William, he called upon the Fiscal, who, along with a hearty welcome and some glasses of excellent port, gave him the information that he had received instructions to have him prosecuted for climbing Buchaill-more. Professor Tyndall was at Fort William, on his way to Oban, and joined him in a hearty laugh at the baffled deer-stalkers, whose attack expired in this letter. From Fort William he crossed the moor to Corpach, and after a night's rest started on a long tramp of twenty-three miles, broken at Glengarry for a talk with its chief, and at last reached Kinloch-Aylort, to discover at the little inn that one of his boots was falling to pieces, that the rain had begun, and that he was ten miles away from the nearest cobbler. No optimism could mend that boot nor overlook its yawning gaps; and when the sturdy handmaiden informed him that the coals were done and the peats soaking wet, and that he could not have a fire, he gave way to a brief despair. Here he was likely to be storm-stayed for two days, without fire and without books, and driven to the verge of his philosophy; but after a couple of tumblers of hot toddy, it proved equal to the emergency. Wrapped in his plaid, he walked to and fro to keep himself warm, wrote cheerful doggerel on the situation, and finally bought a thick woollen sock to draw over his dissolving boot, and so bind its fragments together.

Awful gusts of wind from the S.W.; terrible splashes of rain on the window; and a sea not fitted to be crossed; so I must wend along the hard rocks of the coast in the face of the buffeting blast. But a man has no right to complain of evils into which he has deliberately plunged himself—evils, besides, that are amply com-

pensated by all the pleasures of novelty and variety which a new country and new people supply.

From Arisaig he returned to Oban, by Moidart and Ardnamurchan,—"very pretty places in stormy weather."

Lectures on the "Names of Places" followed in autumn, and he paid a flying visit to London late in November, to speak at the Festival gathering of the Scottish Corporation.

He began the year 1868 with a reprint of his pamphlet on Educational Reform. It was sent to his friends in Parliament, at the Universities, and in the Public Schools. The correspondence which it entailed and the composition of students' songs seem to have been his chief extra-collegiate interests during the spring of that year. When the session ended, Mrs Blackie went to Altnacraig, leaving him in Edinburgh busy with an article for the 'North British Review,' on the Baroness Bunsen's biography of her husband. This article was a memoir in itself, and expressed the profound admiration which he felt for the wise friend of his student days in Rome, the only man who had been able directly to influence his character and conduct. When its proofs were corrected he followed his wife to Altnacraig, and resumed the study of Gaelic. But towards the end of June his restless feet led him hither and thither,—first to Mull, to find headquarters with Dr Cumming beside Loch Baa, and to explore thence all accessible bens and glens. He left the *Parva domus* bent on a tour in the Orkney and Shetland Islands, and after visits to friends in Inverness and Tain, he achieved his purpose. He met with hearty hospitality, meditated at Stennis with the inevitable sonnets for outcome, weathered storms, noted the teeming sea-bird colonies on the northern cliffs, twanged his lyre to the Old Man of Hoy, left his card on John o' Groat, and returned to Oban about the end of August. Here he stayed all September, working at the

fascinating subject of place-names inspired by the Orcadian itinerary, and corresponding with Mr Isaac Taylor, the chief authority in such research.

When October came to a close he returned to Edinburgh, and the new session was inaugurated by a lecture on Aristotle and his golden mean. He was meditating a rational method of familiarising his class with Greek,—one which he had practised for Latin at Aberdeen, and on which he had to some extent experimented already. His good sense revolted now as ever against dull pedagogic systems, and demanded that Greek should be treated as a human language, capable of expressing human needs, moods, and conditions, and not confined to the uses of literature and science. A simple sentence of everyday greeting or news was turned into what Greek came handy to the class, was examined, corrected, and then committed to memory, and served as a foundation for the next day's experiment. This exercise preluded the morning's work, and has often been cited by his pupils as its most helpful portion. He now designed to expand it into conversation, and he busied himself during the winter in compiling a series of colloquies for this purpose. Besides this, he was occupied with the study of Aristotle, whose scheme of morals he compared with that of Socrates, and ultimately with that of Christ. The gospel of Utilitarianism was then vociferous, and confronted the antique gospels at almost every turn. Its quota of value had not yet been distilled from the mass, and for a time its pretensions were hostile to all that the spiritual enforced beyond the moral code. It is the limitation of human reformers that their insight and foresight are so engrossed with the positive conditions of life and circumstance that the power which shapes and reshapes escapes their ken, and their elaborate systems, embodying all that they are gifted to recognise, fall short

altogether a generation later. Truths remain to be garnered by the wise, but the framework proves to be mere husk and envelope, and falls off before the Eternal Spirit, whose fan is in His hand.

It was natural that Professor Blackie, whose faith in that Eternal Spirit was the strongest motive power in all that he thought and concluded, should be repelled by the pressure of Utilitarianism on the current thought and conclusion of the time, and we find him at first showing an instinctive aversion to its dogmas. Forced by the insistence of the new apostles to face these dogmas, he gave them a certain amount of study, which seems to belong to the years 1869 and 1870.

These matters are mentioned at this point merely as an indication of the bent taken by his thoughts during those winters. Of immediate moment was his correspondence early in 1869 on the pronunciation of Greek. This was extended to the Public Schools as well as to the Universities, and letters from eminent French and German scholars reached him in support of his views. To some of his correspondents he had mentioned his proposed 'Dialogues in Greek and English,' and he received hearty encouragement from the most widely informed amongst them. A few sentences may be quoted from Mr Matthew Arnold's letter on this point:—

I entirely go along with your views as to the use of conversation in teaching Greek and Latin. When I was in Germany I heard the work of the highest class of a gymnasium frequently conducted in Latin: neither our masters nor our pupils would have been capable of the performance, which was most creditable. When I came to hear other lessons expressly given to extemporaneous Latin, I listened with unmixed satisfaction and approval, and have felt ever since how much we should gain by having something of the kind. What you say of the necessity of speaking a thing, and not only reading it, is most true, and directly applies here. I observe that

boys at Harrow have incipient exercises in Latin sentences, *catch* constructions and expressions, and so on. I am convinced that these exercises, which are felt to be very mediæval and oppressive, would be quite lighted up by being made conversational. The object in view, that of teaching certain constructions, might be perfectly attained with the additional advantages of animating and interesting the boys, widening their vocabulary by giving them readiness in the use of it. I entirely wish you success, and remain always, dear Professor Blackie, very truly yours,

MATTHEW ARNOLD.

From Dr Temple, then headmaster of Rugby, came a more guarded approval, admitting, however, "that conversation is a powerful instrument in teaching any language"; but several of the masters of Eton and Harrow expressed their cordial agreement with the addition of colloquial to clerical exercise.

In response to an invitation from the College of Preceptors, he went up to London in April to deliver a lecture upon the whole subject of the teaching of Greek and Latin, and this was printed in pamphlet form and spread abroad. He took advantage of the opportunity to revisit Harrow, and to visit Eton and Bradfield. This time he was admitted to all the classes at Harrow, and through the good offices of his genial host, Mr Oscar Browning, he gained an entrance to the classes at Eton. At Bradfield he was the guest of the headmaster, who sympathised with his reforms, and endeavoured to put them in practice. An attempt to interest the "kilted clergy" in his methods fell rather flat, these preoccupied personages excusing themselves with one consent. But correspondence brought to his knowledge the movement at Cambridge in favour of a rational pronunciation of Latin—a movement led by Professor Munro, and supported by the younger generation of scholars. A bright sojourn in London, his rushings hither and thither made easy by the Underground Railway, which

he pronounced to be "the crowning luxury of the age," followed his visitation of the schools.

His warm interest in the Highlands of Scotland had secured him the privilege of honorary membership of the Highland Society of London, and on May 4 he dined with their brotherhood at St James's Hall on strictly Caledonian fare, the *pièce de résistance* a full-blown haggis, and the conviviality assisted by Highland whisky and Highland snuff. A surprise visit to his friends at Sudbrooke Park followed the round of festivities in town, and on May 21 he went to Oxford to visit Professor Thorold Rogers. His host was a subject of interesting study.

> Grandly and imperiously a Radical, with not a bit of toleration for anything connected with family or Church aristocracy. He flings his denunciations about so sharply that the clerical element everywhere naturally bristles into hostility against him. He is *in* Oxford, not *of* Oxford.

From Oxford he went to visit the Dobells near Gloucester, and thence to Wales to pay some visits in Caermarthenshire. Here Welsh hospitality and the opportunity of learning something of the language delayed him at Dolaucothy a fortnight beyond the time which he had planned, and he wrote humorous apologies to his Penelope at Altnacraig to beg indulgence for her Ulysses, held in bondage to a kind Welsh Calypso who taught his stammering tongue to master her vocables. A short stay with the head of the Theological College at Lampeter brought this Welsh excursion to an end without further invasion of the Celtic Principality, but he carried away with him a warm recollection of the hosts and hostesses who had stayed his feet on its threshold.

He returned to Edinburgh by Liverpool, and found there a budget of letters from schoolmasters throughout the kingdom full of thanks for his lecture on the "Teaching

of Languages." Along with these was one from Mr John Marshall, to whom he had awarded a travelling scholarship for one year, a prize which he gave to the best student in his Greek class. Mr Marshall wrote from Göttingen, where he was busied with the summer term much as the Professor had been forty years earlier. To the gain harvested in his *Wanderjahre* was due the form of this prize, and he encouraged all those of his students able to afford such an "extra" to seek the enlarging and qualifying uses of foreign travel.

By the middle of June he reached Altnacraig, and for about two months settled to its tranquillity and to the enjoyment of its shifting circle of guests. In his turret-study he devoted the mornings to Socrates and Aristotle, and to the company of the Seven Sages of Greece. The afternoons were spent upon the upland moors with the jocund Muse, who furnished him with rhyme and reason for his Students' Songs: at four o'clock he returned to the heather-cushioned cliff, where on sunny days the home-circle was trysted for tea. Visitors, native to the soil or pausing on the wing northwards, found their way to the chosen spot, and many a gleeful surprise welcomed his return from the moors, with his hands full of grass-of-Parnassus in June and of white heather in August. He knew the haunts of the white heather, and although liberal with his spoils, he would not betray their hiding-place. Amongst the guests might be found the Catholic Bishop of Argyle and The Isles—now Archbishop of Edinburgh—Dr Walter C. Smith, Dr MacGregor, Sir Noël Paton, Dr Robertson Smith,—men of all Christian creeds, but all of one Christian charity. Sometimes the little party took boat and crossed to the Lady's Rock or to Heather Island for tea, and the kettle was set on an improvised fire helped by dry kindling-wood from the house, and while it delayed

to boil he read aloud some legend of the place, or some lay of St Columba, or perhaps some rattling lines of frolic or defiance which Musa Burschicosa had lilted on the moor.

It was about this time that Mr Kingdon Clifford came to Oban, one of a reading-party from London, "a pale, thin, sinewy youngster," who learned to haunt Altnacraig. He was as nimble as the Professor, and understood many mysteries unknown to the older man, amongst them rope-dancing and unnumbered card-tricks. The readers no doubt read all day, for they rambled at night; and one memorable evening they left their impedimenta in the porch, hats, shoes, stockings, coats, and vests,—their money and watches loose in the pockets, — and disappeared on the moorland. The discovery of this deposit alarmed the Altnacraig household, which sat up till midnight without sign of their return. But in the morning the vestments had vanished, and they had tidings of the footsore wanderers, who had too rashly ventured over heather, bog, and rock with feet unshod, and had crawled back at the rate of a mile an hour!

About the middle of August the blue hills of Mull drew the Professor across to Tusculum beside Loch Baa. Here he spent a few days with Dr Cumming, and was taught to play bagatelle by Lord Colin Campbell. A lecture at Tobermory divided his visit into two parts, and the latter half was given to a geological study of Loch Baa and its shores. This absence from Oban led to his missing ex-President Jefferson Davis, who was the occasion of some pleasant parties given by Mr Hutcheson on board the excursion steamers.

When he returned from Mull it was to find the proofs of 'Musa Burschicosa' at Altnacraig, and September was devoted to their correcting. The little book was published in October, and it was dedicated to the students of Edin-

burgh University, to whom he described the songs as "the offspring of a pure spirit of enjoyment of life."

It is interesting to find appreciative letters from Mr Gladstone, Lord President Inglis, Sir Douglas Maclagan, himself a songster in the same bright vein, and Lord Neaves, noted for his lays of good-fellowship. Of the collection, the "Song of Good Greeks" and the "Song of Geology" were most liked. The latter had been submitted to Professors Tyndall and Ramsay for correction, and both had delighted in its vivacity. Professor Ramsay had taken much pains with its scientific terminology, and the stanzas represent the order of development known to geologists a generation ago. The poet himself looked upon this as one of his best efforts in rhyme.

At the beginning of the new session he was ailing, and had to be contented for a few weeks with his normal work. But the new year 1870 found him championing the cause of the lady students in the Edinburgh University, and protesting both in speech and letter against the shabby conduct of their opponents. He was busy, too, inviting fresh fellowship into the Blackie Brotherhood, of which, at the January celebration, Sir Alexander Grant and Mr Brodie the sculptor were made members.

The winter wore to an end, busy and convivial, as Edinburgh winters were then,—his studies on Socrates, Aristotle, and the Utilitarians taking shape in his mind, while his summer impressions were being matured into convictions on the crofter question, on the value of the Gaelic language, and on subjects bound up with these, which were destined to bear practical fruit in due time.

By the end of April he was on the wing for London, halting at Manchester to greet an ardent reformer of classical pronunciation. He delivered four lectures on Socrates, Aristotle, Christianity, and Utilitarianism, at afternoon

meetings of the Royal Institution, as well as an evening lecture on "Mythology," in which he opposed the extravagance of the new school, whose leaders referred every polytheistic, heroic, or nursery myth to the episodes in the sun's diurnal course. Many pleasant social events made his prolonged stay in town memorable, and he referred to it in after-years as the most interesting of all his visits to London.

He breakfasted twice with Mr Gladstone, made the acquaintance of Mr John Morley, Sir John Bowring, Mr J. A. Froude, and Mr Tom Taylor, and revisited the friends of earlier years, amongst them Carlyle, Dr Hodgson, and the Kinglakes. His headquarters were first with his brother-in-law, Mr Edward Wyld, at Holland Park, and then with Mr and Mrs Archer in Phillimore Gardens, but he paid flying visits to his relatives at Stepney and elsewhere. At Mr Gladstone's he met Dr Hawkins, the head of Oriel, who came to hear his lecture on Mythology.

Happily [he wrote] there was nothing against Oxford in the lecture, only a dash at Max Müller, of whom I spoke with the utmost respect and love.

He described a Sunday's adventures early in May :—

I went to hear Jowett in the forenoon at a Broad Church in Marylebone. The sermon was from Acts x. 34 and 35, a regular Broad Church text, as broad as the world, and by the learned preacher made to include the Vedic hymns, Zoroaster, Buddha, Socrates, Plato, Epictetus, what not—very instructive. At the door of the church we shook hands with Jowett, "Ecce Homo," Talmud Deutsch, and other notabilities. Thereafter I lunched quietly with Mrs Gregory in her wee house at 21 Green Street, and at 3 P.M. went with her to a conference of spiritualists, where, as a matter of course, the Pro. spoke—not on spirits, however, or ghosts, but on Agrarian Laws and the Division of Property! In the evening I went to hear Baboo Chunder Sen, who chose pretty much the same text, and enlarged in the fashionable style on Toleration, Charity, and no opinions in particular. He speaks fluently enough, but has little variety either in

matter or manner, and will never be a great orator. I was introduced to him after sermon, and gave him a friendly invitation to Altnacraig.

On May 17 he took railway to Richmond, and

marched full speed up Richmond Hill, and when I got to the top saw the broad fields of infinite foliage spread out to the west, the silver Thames at my feet, and the royal trees of the Park on my left hand. I then entered through the open gate of Pembroke Lodge. You guess now that my object was to look on Lady Amberley's blithe face. They were out in the grounds; so I took a ramble, and in case of losing my game went along whistling "Cam' ye by Atholl?" which discovered the bird, and out they all came, Lady Russell, Lady Amberley, and her lord. I had a pleasant walk with them, and then a cup of tea within doors. Instead of passing the gay season here, they are going to Rodborough, near Stroud, "to work," as she said—that is, to pursue their studies. I made full utterance to them on important subjects, and felt quite happy in their company. The weather is now splendid, the most glorious poetry of nature and of art combined: such is London when you know how to use it, and take things quietly and piously.

The constant racket became fatiguing towards the end of May, and he went to Cambridge for a few days, an honoured guest at Trinity, where he met, under Mr Clark's auspices, all that was noteworthy in the University and the town. The reformation in Latin pronunciation effected by Professor Munro was of much moment to him, and he listened with delight to an oration by the Public Orator, voiced as he had advocated for forty years. Except this, Mrs Augusta Webster made most impression upon him, her aims and attainments in Greek exciting his interest: the acquaintance ripened to a pleasant correspondence and the gift of his 'Homer' to the poetess.

A visit to Bedford for the sake of John Bunyan, and a few days' quiet in Hampshire with relatives, restored him to his normal activity, and early in June he went to Marlborough College to visit Dr Bradley, and then to Glou-

cestershire to pay Mr and Mrs Dobell the visit which they had negotiated the summer before. It seems to have been a very pleasant one, and included an excursion of the trio to Rodborough to visit the Amberleys. Little inclined as was Professor Blackie to spend time on works of fiction, he found himself inspired during this visit to read 'Lothair,' which had just come out—rather for the sake of its author, into whose marvellously compacted character he hoped in some measure to penetrate, than for the sake of the story. But the book fascinated him, and he went steadily through its three volumes. He commented in a letter, dated June 15, as follows :—

I have finished 'Lothair,' and am most gratified with it, and greatly surprised too; for my prepossession was strong against the author. It is a wise and a true and a noble book. It is not only a picture of London life in high circles, but something far better; it is a wise solution of the most vexed religious and philosophical questions of the day. The theology is particularly good—perhaps I think so because it is substantially my own. In this work Disraeli has nobly vindicated the divine right of the Semitic element in the history of human culture without doing injustice to other elements. Hellenism and Hebraism here play their just parts.

Later in the year he made this opinion public in a letter addressed to the editor of the 'Scotsman,' and printed in its issue of November 1. This came under Disraeli's notice, and he expressed himself as highly gratified by so discerning an interpretation of the spirit of 'Lothair.' The letter was republished in Messrs Longman's "Notes on Books."

He was back at Altnacraig by June 22, and busied himself once more with the study of Gaelic, taking up 'Ossian' in the original, and corresponding with Highland ministers and schoolmasters about its translation. An occupation of lighter character was the composition of his 'Lays of the Highlands and Islands.' Some of his best

poetical work is in this volume, which was not published till 1872, although most of its sonnets, songs, and lays were in existence already. The Orcadian excursion had supplied some of them; his visits to Mull had suggested nine of the best; Ben Cruachan, the Buchaillmore, King's House, Glencoe, Taynuilt, and Oban had each its rhymed recognition. These lay unsorted as yet, and when August came and the "spirit in his feet" grew restive, he took steamer to Iona, and settled at the Columba Inn for ten days, to penetrate into every nook amongst its barrows and every sand-strewn crescent on its shores. The Duke of Argyll's book on the holy island of Columba had just been published, and formed, with Adamnan's Life of the saint, his guide to all its shrines. He was much refreshed by this complete abandonment to the solitude and associations of Iona, and wrote the poems called "The Voyage" and "The Death of Columba" while under their spell. A Sunday ramble—after the hallowed sacramental service, held in the open air upon the spot where Jesus was first preached to Hebridean islanders—led him to the north side of Iona, and he climbed Dun Ee, whose wonderful outlook, which reaches to the cones of Cuchullin in Skye, inspired one of his noblest sonnets, ending—

> Here rather follow me, and take thy stand
> By the grey cairn that crowns the lone Dun Ee,
> And let thy breezy worship be the grand
> Old Bens and old grey knolls that compass thee,
> The sky-blue waters and the snow-white sand,
> And the quaint isles far-sown upon the sea.

CHAPTER XVI.

PILGRIM YEARS.

1870–1872.

A TOUCH of vertigo bewilders us as we try to follow the Professor through the maze of interwoven activities which he so nimbly threaded during these years. We enter upon a period of cession to the interest of the moment, of suspense from concentrated effort, of varied study, of enjoyment, acquisition, expansion. The pressure of life had relaxed for a time; Commissions and Parliaments relieved him from the strain of lifting up his voice in the unredeemed wilderness of education; he scarcely cared to swell the chorus, the burden of whose song he had manfully raised. For some years, therefore, we are concerned with a multitude of matters, important and purposely useful, but demanding no longer the strenuous heroism of earlier tasks. Something of abandonment to personal enjoyment may be discovered in this period, involving work, social life, travel, and study in temperate proportions.

The level is broken by one stirring enterprise, to which he was impelled partly by circumstances, partly by the influence of his summer studies, ungoaded by professional

demands. These had necessarily supplied much of the stimulus to his Æschylean and Homeric labours, but their claims were satisfied, and he was free—in his own words—"to let things take their natural course."

The Franco-German war of 1870-71 engaged his interest to a degree seldom effected by political occurrences, which he generally disregarded. Two impulses accounted for this, both personal to himself. These were the fighting instinct, which in his case was rather mental than physical, and the part which German influence had played in his education. War was always attractive to him, whether past or present. He had accepted the theory of its value both for individuals and for nations, and his enthusiasm for the war-makers seems, at this distance of time, to border on extravagance. His sympathies were wholly German. Germany was the native country of his mind and of its nurture, and a constant current of filial and patriotic fervour repaid the debt which his heart acknowledged.

He knew little or nothing of the French. Misled by the tawdry triumphs of the Third Empire, he mistook for that industrious, thrifty, brave, enduring, ingenious nation, the hysterical *mêlée* of its worst elements then in the capital. And since all his emotions had to get themselves into rhyme and stanza, he busied himself in autumn, during rambles on the Oban heights, with a collection of 'War-songs from the German,' which was published towards the end of the year, and appropriately dedicated to Thomas Carlyle, the apostle of strength.

The songs go thundering along [wrote his old friend] with a furious tramp of battle in them; and I suppose, if one could sing, would be very musical and heart-inspiring. I especially applaud the clear and vigorous historical summary, which will be instructive to so many dark people here at home. As for the Dedication, what can I say but drop a veil over my blushing face and answer by expressive silence! Good be with you always, dear Blackie.

A copy of the little book was accepted by the Queen, and he had the further honour of presenting one to the Crown Princess of Germany.

The composition of the historical introduction, which reviewed the first Napoleon's outrages upon Germany, wound him up to a resolve that he would see for himself the triumphal return of the German troops to Berlin in the summer of 1871.

The session over, the cause of the lady students duly defended, the inclusion of the burgh schools in the new scheme of educational reform rather impatiently handled, and other matters dismissed, he started for London on April 19, took up his familiar quarters at Phillimore Gardens for ten days, and fired off a rousing lecture on War to a Sunday evening audience. He lectured at the Royal Institution as well at a Friday evening function, and seems to have ventured on the burning topic of Darwinism in the presence of its luminaries. But the vicissitudes of species were not "far ben" in his thoughts, and after a whirl of dinners he sailed for Antwerp on the last day of the month.

To see Germany in its hour of triumph; to penetrate its mood; to learn the *pros* and *cons* of this stupendous change, as they were in the vernacular, not in the crude transcripts and shallow versions which reached the English ear; to know how historians and philosophers and the men of thought regarded this *avatar* of the men of action; to see the men of action themselves,—these were the purposes which moved him.

He rested at Cologne for a day and a night, and then dropped in on Professor Bernays at Bonn, to sip Rhine wine "and to hold all sorts of profound and profitable disputations about English Philosophy and German Politics" for two hours.

A "wander" to the Drachenfels and up some of the peaks at its back gratified his restless feet next day, and sent him back to Bonn fatigued enough for his content. The day after he visited Bunsen's grave, in the same churchyard as that of Moritz Arndt. It was a shrine for the Professor, who, growing old, felt his heart glow with gratitude to Providence, who had "led his blind unpractised foot to great-souled Bunsen." Upon the headstone he read "Let us walk in the light of the Eternal"—a message from that pure spirit who had attained above what he sought below.

"Thoughts of Bunsen and Arndt sink deep, and are the most profitable of meditations," he wrote; and his pondering by their graves was shaped into a sonnet.

A shrine less holy attracted him to Cassel, and he took train up the lovely Lahnthal to reach it. This was Wilhelmshöhe, about three miles from the little city on the Fulda. He strolled through the palace grounds and gay saloons, inspected the mark of Louis Napoleon's half-burned cigars upon his writing-table, no venerable relic of the captivity, gossiped about the captive's looks and occupations with the castellan, and packed his reflections into a couple of sonnets as he loitered back to Cassel. They record a man and a doom all unheroic, and are wasted ingenuity.

Göttingen and a new professoriate claimed his next sojourn, which lasted a week. During this time Dr Pauli was his hospitable entertainer, and the student of forty-four years earlier found himself a lion in the scene of his first aspirations after academic dignity. He attended lectures with diligence, was anew smitten with wrath at the immense gap between the matured learning of the German and the scrambling pedagogy of the Scottish Universities, and was increasingly impressed with the essential goodness

and rationality of German scholars. One little criticism he ventured to make, which indicates a change in himself of which he was doubtless unaware. He liked their homeliness less than in his student days, and would have preferred "some show of manners and external presentation." From his host he gained much information with regard to the great historical epoch in progress, and, with the help of German books on public questions, he was strengthened in his natural leaning towards the Prussian side of the whole question.

From Göttingen he branched off to Luther's country, visited Eisleben and Wittenberg, meeting at the former place a train of French soldiers released and returning to France, and at the latter outbreaking into the regulation fourteen lines on the twin Reformers of Germany. Even more immediately impressive than their dust were the graves of 150 Frenchmen, the toll left to death by the contingent of prisoners who had just been released. On this monument of unutterable sorrow he laid a tribute of tears—better than the unshapen verses, which failed to express his real emotion.

Berlin was the goal of this journey, and his object was not to see the city but to see the Emperor, Bismark, and Moltke. Of the three, Bismark was naturally the most magnetic; and although he did not attain to the honour of an introduction to him, he was enabled by the good offices of Mr George Bunsen to attend the sittings of the Diet, and both to see and hear the Chancellor. The story tells best in his own words:—

On Friday, about 2 P.M., I went down the Leipziger Strasse to the Parliament House, and took my seat in the Strangers' Gallery. The bench on the opposite side of the House, which is occupied by members of the Upper House—who sit along with the Lower House, only not voting—was as usual almost empty; and I looked for Bismark in vain. Only Moltke sat amid the Lower House throng, as quiet

and meditative as an English professor. Shortly, however, turning my eye again to the Bench of Magnates, I found the central seat occupied by a broad-chested, commanding-looking figure, whom I more than half recognised, and who turned out to be Bismark. He sat more than half an hour signing papers and spending a few significant sentences on those who sat near; then he sent across the House a note to the Speaker, by which I guessed that he had some intimation to make to the House. And so it was. This was good luck, to hear the most powerful man in Europe open his mouth, and see how he opened it. So the Neptunian-breasted hero arose, and looked exactly like the one man who had a right to command everybody there; nevertheless, what he said was given forth in a very quiet, modest way, being, in fact, only an intimation that the Peace had been signed at Versailles, and that he had been ordered by the King to depart immediately for Frankfort to set his final seal to the business there. This was the whole; only I saw him quite close on the street afterwards, with his military cloak, and with his white cuirassier cap on his head, as if he wished to keep down his lofty presentment as much as possible by a humble top-piece.

A descriptive sonnet expressed the Professor's homage, and this was forwarded to the great Chancellor, with what effect is not recorded.

Hearing that the triumphal return of the Prussian army to Berlin would not take place till the middle of June, Professor Blackie decided to utilise the intervening weeks in a rapid survey of St Petersburg and Moscow,—a plan which he had made at the outset, but reserved for favouring occasion, as it was secondary to his main intentions. He left Berlin on May 23 for Königsberg, where a halt refreshed him for the further journey, ended on the 26th. He had letters of introduction to the English Ambassador, Sir Andrew Buchanan, and to the Consul; and these gentlemen provided him with a week's social experiences, while by dint of diligent map-study and of a native faculty for the points of the compass, he filled his mornings with sight-seeing, unhelped and unhindered by companionship. He dined one day with Count Orloff Davidoff, who had

been a student in Edinburgh forty-five years earlier, a member of the Greek class under Professor Dunbar; and he was permitted to be a spectator of a very brilliant procession at Tsarkoe-Selo, described in a letter to his wife:—

You must understand there was yesterday a grand display here on occasion of the baptism of one of the Imperial babies; and I got a letter from the Minister of Education to Prince Galitzin, the Master of Ceremonies, and drove out in the railway with a whole host of princes, grafs, generals, and generalissimos to the Palace of Tsarkoe-Selo, fifteen miles to the south. Prince Galitzin could not get me into the chapel where the royal baby was baptised, but he got me an excellent station in the lobby of the Palace, where I looked out from behind a glass door right in front of a long gallery, down which the Emperor and all the procession of notables came after the baptism to refresh their imperial mortality with a little lunch. I had two princesses beside me to prevent any appearance of improper humiliation. I wished you had been there fully to appreciate not only the general splendour, as I did, but the beauty of the details. I never saw such a show, well worth a journey of some two or three thousand miles.

From the northern capital he travelled early in June to Moscow, where good fortune awaited him in the form of an old student of his own, already an experienced Muscovite, and now the most distinguished of our authorities on matters of internal Russian polity, Sir Daniel Mackenzie Wallace. Together they visited the lions of Moscow, inspecting the "jewelled religiosity" of its churches, the marvellous view from the Kremlin, and the huge Foundling Hospital with its strange statistics. In the Cathedral the animated, rapid, inquiring figure of the Professor roused curiosity in the worshippers, and they crowded after him, and raised a report in the newspapers that he was Monsieur Jules Favre.

By June 5 his glance at Moscow was over, and he was on his way back, by moor, fen, and forest, to St Petersburg, where he wandered about the city till he knew its

streets as well as he knew Old Edinburgh. A week later he fled from its banquets and palaces, its cloisters and splendours, to Warsaw, where he rested on his way back to Berlin.

The triumphal entry was fixed for June 16. He was invited to stay with Mr and Mrs George Bunsen, and saw the procession from a comfortable seat, which cost him three dollars. "It was a wonderful sight," he wrote, "to see billow after billow of armed warriors coming out of the Linden and spreading to a glittering ocean in the great open square." The decorations, the masses of well-satisfied Berlinese, the illuminations, all contributed to the blaze of the moment, and completed this festival of a new empire, for which the mourning mothers of Germany had paid the reckoning.

The spectacle well over, Professor Blackie went home by Hamburg and Leith, with his mind full of memories. "What I have seen," he said, "will require a whole summer to digest." His health was affected by fatigue and by the bad weather, which dogged his steps up to the last, although the sun shone on the procession. An ailment, which had long been in abeyance, irritated his skin and obliged him to take medicine. The "thorn in the flesh" he called it, and it persisted throughout the two months of his absence from home.

Mrs Blackie was at Altnacraig, and after a few days spent in Edinburgh, collecting books upon the political problem of the Franco-German war, he followed her thither. He left orders with his publisher to forward copies of 'Homer' to the friends in Berlin and St Petersburg whose hospitalities he so much enjoyed; and before starting for Oban he bought a bulky parcel of white-foxglove seed, to be sowed by his own hand in all the nooks and crannies of his rocky domain.

He found Mrs Blackie far from well. She was suffering from nervous depression, to which she had become more than ever prone, and which robbed her of much enjoyment and made this summer in the Highlands a toilsome round of housekeeping cares and duties.

Her husband consulted his books, refreshed his leisure with Ossian and the history of clan badges, and corrected the proofs of 'Four Phases of Morals,' a book which gave to the reading public the amended and amplified substance of his lectures on Socrates, Aristotle, Christianity, and Utilitarianism, delivered the year before in London. In commemoration of their original purpose the Professor dedicated the book to Sir Henry Holland, President of the Royal Institution. Its issue dated about the end of October 1871, and the book met with wide acceptance: an edition appeared in New York during the following year, and a second issue was called for in 1874.

This work stands amongst its author's most popular, vigorous, and characteristic efforts. He was at home on Socrates and Aristotle, and we are justified in expecting from him the lucid and large-minded estimate which he gives of these Hellenic apostles of truth and moderation. But his chapter on Christianity had an even greater value at the time of its publication, as correlating the new law of Christian love with the needs and longings articulate in the best minds of the ancient world, and as contrasting with the failures of man's many religious inventions the divine force for salvation born again into the world to conquer the world only so far as it is permitted a free course.

Perhaps the lecture on Utilitarianism betrays the rash courage of a free-lance, undisciplined to the onset and the brunt of orderly attack, and resenting more by instinct than conviction conclusions which the teachers of its

school have left exposed to such attack. It needs more than the spelling out of sundry books upon the subject to furnish a mind emphatically antagonistic with arguments which can lay bare the insufficient area of utilitarian postulates and the deliberate exaggeration of their practical philosophy.

The materialistic nightmare [wrote Mr Froude] will disappear, as it has disappeared before. It has its periods as comets have, but you do excellently well to call it by its right name.[1]

Another literary labour of this autumn was a revisal of his translation of 'Faust,' and his morning's achievement was read to the fireside circle in the evening,—a circle often widened by sympathetic outsiders.

In a letter written to his Aunt Menie—now a very old lady, but in full possession of her faculties, and living in Edinburgh with Miss Christina Blackie—he dilates on the comforts of Altnacraig:—

The sun is dominant, with occasional whiffs of rain sufficient to encourage vegetation but not to prevent perambulation: inside all is taste, elegance, and grace, the natural fair effect of the fair cause who has organised the establishment. It is worth while coming here if but to feel the comfort of the circular, velvet-bottomed chairs which furnish forth the drawing-room. These chairs by their circular form indicate a feeling of security out of which a man cannot be shaken, and by their softness produce a sensation of comfort to which it is impossible to imagine that Olympus with its couches of rosy clouds contains anything more luxurious. We have a henhouse made by Mr Ross in the most fashionable style of rusticity, in which there are at the present moment eight fighting cocks and two hens! Every morning at breakfast we eat huge turkey-eggs, and in the evening we make ourselves comfortable with whisky toddy and a fine blazing fire from logs cut out of the thinnings of the large and rich forest which surrounds us. Oh! what you lose by not coming to Altnacraig!

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[1] This and other quotations from the letters of Mr J. A. Froude to Professor Blackie are made by kind permission of Mr Froude's executors.

The winter session passed without more than the usual quota of social events, of which the presence of Dean Stanley at a meeting of the Hellenic, and a visit from "Orion,"—both celebrities having come to lecture at the Philosophical Institution,—are most worthy to be noted.

Many of the letters which the Professor received were from Highlanders at home and abroad, whose love and admiration were setting towards him in a current unstinted and almost uninterrupted to the end of his life. He loved what they loved—the mighty Bens, the peat-brown torrents, the open moors, the fragrant forests of birch and pine and fir. And above all, he loved the clachan and the croft, and cared to smell the pungent reek of the cotter's fire, and to learn from the cotter's lips the names for all needs of home and husbandry. He loved their language, its literature, its legends old as the myths of Rome, its tender homeliness "shot" with the gold of imagination. He denounced their wrongs, and his heart bled for their exile: what wonder that they loved him?

The talk in spring 1872 was of 'Olrig Grange' and the mystery of its authorship, not impenetrable to the Professor, who had paid just assignment of tribute towards the end of April, when he was due in London.

He travelled thither in beguiling intercourse with a Sanscrit grammar, finding welcome at his brother-in-law's house in Holland Park. His lecture at the Royal Institution was delivered on April 26, and was devoted to the "History and Growth of Modern Greek." Amongst his auditors was Cardinal Manning, who had written to him on the subject of the 'Four Phases of Morals' as follows:—

Your lecture pleased me greatly from its indignant Theism. What are we doing? We are letting a handful of men talk Atheism, and "their tongue goeth through the world." And our men of culture

are reviving gnosticism and sophistry. I rejoice, therefore, when any one speaks to them as you do.

The Professor met the Cardinal after the lecture, and they had an interesting talk.

Between Manning and me there exists a wonderful sympathy in our views of English philosophy since Locke. The agreement consists simply in this, that we prefer Socrates and St Paul to Bentham and Hume, and consider the English generally as not a thinking people.

A lunch with the Cardinal followed shortly.

We got on swimmingly: he says my book is written in excellent English, and always clear and distinct, and he sympathises with my Theism and with my Aristotelian sanity.

He breakfasted with Mr Gladstone on May 9,

when, the conversation being long, I did not get away till 11.30. He was very frank and agreeable. There were present only the family, a Mr Noël, and a beautiful little creature, very eloquent about the law of copyright, about which I professed myself very careless. She lectured both Gladstone and me in a very charming style on the subject. But I am not the man to enter into an agitation because a pretty woman asks me.

His quarters were changed to Green Street, where he found himself in the heart of a spiritualistic circle, and wasted some time on lectures and seances occupied with the hysterical futilities of the craft.

I hear strange talk about these spirits every day, but sit quietly keeping myself apart from them and their ways. I have schooled myself to be perfectly content with what reason can teach me, and feel comfortable only in an atmosphere of sobriety and intelligibility.

He must have invited Carlyle to be present at one of these foolish functions, for a scrap of paper records the indignant sage's refusal.

No, a thousand times no! Spiritualism = Ultra-Brutalism and Liturgy of Apes by the Dead Sea! Let not such things be once named among you!

The Professor

walked down to Chelsea, and spent two agreeable hours with the grey old prophet and his brother. As usual, he laid about him all round. However, we managed to get on, as he was willing to take all the talk to himself. On departure he gave me a nice present of the two big volumes of his 'Apprenticeship and Travels of Wilhelm Meister,' with an inscription in his own hand.

A whirl of breakfast and dinner parties absorbed him to the end of May,—with Mr Froude, Mr Haweis, Mrs Thistlethwayte, Mr Stopford Brooke, Mr Tom Taylor, Lady Burdett Coutts, and many others. It was a relief to pay a quiet visit to Dr and Mrs Kennedy at Stepney, after which he went for a week to Phillimore Gardens, to stay with Mr and Mrs Archer, in a home always congenial to him, where the interests were real and not feverish, and where the "sweet influences" of art and nature calmed and enriched the social life.

Mr Archer was invalided, and sent his guest to represent him at the Artists' Fund Dinner.

Prinsep made a telling speech, and the Pro. also came off with flying colours. I had not the least intention of making a speech, but the health of the strangers and visitors having been put on the programme, my name was specialised, perhaps as the most talkative, and I certainly did not find it difficult to make them feel that a Scotch Professor can speak English as well as spell Greek. I saw Millais, Graham, the Faeds, President Grant, and many more.

In the intervals left by his social engagements he kept several appointments with Mr Isbister, to whom he had submitted the MS. of the 'Lays of the Highlands and Islands.' That gentleman liked the poems, and proposed that those on St Columba should first appear in 'Good Words,' and afterwards take their place in a volume, which he was willing to prepare for issue in time for the tourists' season. The Professor undertook to write a preface serviceable as an itinerary to those tourists who cared to see

the Highlands in the spirit of their historic and romantic associations, and this work occupied his mornings after leaving town.

Perhaps his final fling there was a second breakfast with Mr Gladstone.

We had Tom Taylor, Lord Lyttelton, Lord Houghton, and an artistical gentleman called Pennington, who declaimed very well one of Macaulay's ballads; also Knowles, an architect. I forgathered specially with Lord Lyttelton, who is Hellenistic.

He went to Oxford on June 1, but, except a talk with Mr Jowett and a dinner with Dr Bradley, had little to record of an uninteresting visit, and left, after two days' stay at the Mitre Inn, for Nailsworth in Gloucestershire, and the hospitalities of his friends Mr and Mrs Dobell. He found them both in frail health, but "dainty, delicate, saintly, odd, and altogether original." He was storm-stayed part of the time.

The weather continues Obanesque: much wind, much rain, many clouds, little sunshine, and no heat. Who could have thought of such an exhibition of the elemental Old Adam here?

The 'Times' of June 18 brought him the sorrowful tidings of Dr Norman Macleod's death. "It is a blow to my soul. To think that Scotland should thus have her noblest son struck down." His "Itinerary" was finished, and already proof-sheets of the 'Lays' pursued him on his pilgrimage. He left for Gloucester, where he lectured and was lionised, and whence he journeyed to Exeter, inspected the Cathedral there, and took train for Truro. Here he made his headquarters in the Red Lion Inn for some days, and the spell of bad weather being over, footed it merrily through Cornwall, "jumping about from shore to shore," and returning to his nest again. On one of these excursions he walked twenty-seven miles within the limits of twelve hours, resting during three of the twelve.

Back to Edinburgh, from Edinburgh to Oban, and from Oban to Inverness, formed the next sequence of flights, and returning by the Caledonian Canal, he wrote an account of his doings to his aunt, Miss Menie Stodart. Most of his letters to her were written on board one or other of the Highland steamers, and this one is dated Gondolier, Fall of Foyers, July 13:—

I have spent a very pleasant week in Inverness. I harangued several splendid audiences on *Gaelic*, and *Nationality*, and *Depopulation*, and came off with volleys of applause; but I wish not only to entertain, but to stir up noble ideas that will fructify. Besides speechification, we had Highland songs, and Highland dances, and a Gaelic oration from one of the ministers. Then there was the great Inverness wool-market, and a display of brawny figures. To be altogether in the element, I went to the dinner in the afternoon: there I found myself, strange enough, sitting at the right hand of Highland lairds and Highland M.P.'s.

In August the 'Lays of the Highlands and Islands' appeared, dedicated to Lady Burdett Coutts, and receiving a welcome from the public, expressed in many letters,—amongst them appreciative thanks from Professor Campbell Shairp, Sir Andrew Ramsay, Sir Theodore Martin, Dr Halley, and, of exceptional interest, from Charles Edward d'Albanie, one of the Sobieski Stuarts well known in Scotland during the early half of the century. Some sentences may be quoted from the first and last of these letters.

My dear Bard [wrote Professor Campbell Shairp from Aberfeldy], —Thank you very much for sending me your 'Lays.' Coming at this golden time of the year, there is less leisure to read them carefully, as I have been all day long on the hills, and only have time to look at them when I come in tired in the evening. Still I have dipped into some of the shorter ones, and find a fine, breezy exhalation in them. They are certainly like yourself, and that is a main thing. The longer poems I shall keep for closer reading, when, in your own words, late September makes us

"Heap up the logs and trim the lamp, and bring
Our winter friends, our long-neglected books."

Sobieski Stuart wrote in warm acknowledgment of verses which recalled to him the many Bens of Scotland,

upon which I have often slept, and from their summits seen the sun rise or sink. The poetry in which you have described these scenes fills me with delight and admiration. You have sent forth the feelings of a mind—elevated above the world, like the mountains which you describe lifting their foreheads towards heaven—filled with glory and gratitude to Him, God! the Creator; and it fills my heart with profound consolation to feel that there are still in this age of unbelief some illustrious and kindred spirits to shine forth like the sun in Satan's face.

Towards the end of August the Professor went to Aberfeldy to pay Dr and Mrs Kennedy a short visit, and amongst the movements of the party there may be noted the ascent of Schiehallion in company with Professor Campbell Shairp and Mr Milne Home, "a stout old geologist engaged in a hunt for boulders." A visit to Ardgour, and a fall in one of the rocky glens which his restless feet explored, brought this summer's adventures to a close, and he had to nurse a sprained ankle at Altnacraig until October, when he left for Edinburgh.

Soon after his return to Hill Street he received a gratifying letter from the East. The lecture on "Modern Greek" delivered in April at the Royal Institution had been noticed with cordial appreciation in the 'Neologos,' a Greek journal published at Constantinople, whose editors requested Mr John Gennadius to procure the address in its entirety, and to translate it into modern Greek for the benefit of their readers. The father of this gentleman had believed in and had taught the vitality of ancient Greek and its identity with the modern language, notwithstanding a vanishing foreign element and some provincial corruption in the latter. The son had inherited his father's faith, and now welcomed the Professor's advocacy of a rational view not merely of the development of modern

from ancient Greek, but of the teaching of both languages as so related, and as, in fact, one and almost the same.

In the letter which requests the full text of Professor Blackie's lecture, with permission to translate it for the columns of the 'Neologos,' Mr Gennadius expresses his long-continued admiration for the learning, liberality, and enthusiasm with which the lecturer had for many years advocated the ideas and traditions of Greek scholars concerning their language.

> I will consider it a great honour [he proceeds] to render into Greek anything emanating from so high an authority, from one who is respected and loved by all Greeks of any learning.

The editors, on whose behalf he wrote, desired to make the lecture widely known in Greece, and for this purpose proposed to include it in an annual volume issued by them at the beginning of the year, as well as to print it in the 'Neologos.'

Rhymed invitations were sent out for the Hellenic meeting, and provoked answers in kind—Greek, German, and English. Here is one from the pen of a learned Professor :—

> "O weh! O nein, muss sein die Antwort mein :
> Es kann nicht, kann nicht, kann nicht sein."

And another runs :—

> "The page of the Father of History,
> With all his quaintness and mystery,
> A song whatever its ring
> (So that I am not asked to sing),
> A supper that's sure to be good,
> With varied potations and food,
> Are attractions to me, one and all,
> So I gladly respond to your call."

A scheme to raise a statue to John Knox interested Professor Blackie, to whom that fierce apostle was a hero,

and he wrote far and wide to collect contributions. The business hung fire for some years, however, much to his disappointment; for the weft and woof of Scottish life was of varied texture and many colours, and there was no unanimous voice to do homage to the memory of the strong, crafty, unmerciful, shrewd, and victorious Reformer. Saints of such complexion are hard to recognise, and yet just such a stubborn warrior did Scotland need in that his day, and we may well be grateful for the work he did, even when we mislike the manner of its doing. Deliverance from formalism, and a noble national education, produced Robert Burns and Walter Scott, and Knox's truculent right arm effected the one and laid the foundations of the other. The characteristic heroism of the Scottish Reformer appealed to the Professor, himself a "happy warrior," and at this time full of resentment against the insidious influences which were sapping the national character, and transforming its rugged idiosyncrasy into the imperturbable type prevailing in the south. Edinburgh was in its decadence. A sort of trivial fashionableness had spread like a blight over its society. Decoration took the place of distinction, and the remnant of men and women who belonged to freer times either fled from the contamination, or shut themselves up in library and studio to remember the past and avoid the present. There was no such course possible for the Professor, who fell to spirited denunciation of the new drivelling gentility. For the next score of years we find him the champion of the old historic Scotland—the land of the white rose and Prince Charlie; of the brown bent and the Covenanters; of "grey St Andrews" and Wishart, Hamilton, and Myln; of old St Giles' and Jenny Geddes; the land made strong by endurance, noble by devotion, and free by resistance to the death.

CHAPTER XVII.

'SELF-CULTURE.'

1873–1874.

THE winter's leisure was spent in getting into brief emphatic expression the Professor's many thoughts upon the formation of a well-balanced manhood, which his long acquaintance with young men, and his observation of their tendency to turn from sanity and righteousness at the call of any "philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world," had suggested. He noticed to what class of character each beguiling call appealed, and he endeavoured—by a book which might serve as a rallying cry to all open-minded readers—to summon them back to the right starting-point.

Some exception has been taken to the title of this little volume. "Self-culture," it has been urged, means self-worship; but the objection is pedantic, and the term conveys correctly the writer's meaning. Mind, body, and spirit go to form a human being, and each needs recognition, instruction, education, to interfuse its influence with the others into integral health and symmetry. The Professor, himself of sane mind and wholesome habits, loving life for all its joys and lessons, having learned, in reverence for

God the creator and provider, and in communion with His Spirit, how momentous a gift is this of life, impressed in wise words upon the young the right attitude toward life, the right use to be made of its opportunities. "Having," he says, "by the golden gift of God the glorious lot of living, let us endeavour to live nobly."

His counsel is conveyed in brief, apt, and vivid expression. No dull reiteration saps the interest with which we read the little book. Its ninety pages contain more of pure wisdom than all the weighty tomes of modern philosophy, with their dreary and futile anxiety to make us independent of God. How welcome to the young manhood of the world this antidote to the torpor of these verbose schemes has proved, is indicated by its wide acceptance. Nine editions of the book appeared in three years, and twenty years have produced no fewer than twenty-two editions. It has been translated into modern Greek, French, German, Italian, Danish, Swedish, and Finnish, has appeared in many American reprints, and in 1893 was bought amongst the English-speaking natives of India to the extent of 2000 copies. Many requests have come to its publisher from districts in India for permission to translate it into the local vernacular. One of these was received recently from a remote northern quarter, where the people only a few years ago were notably fierce and warlike, and averse to British rule.

Its composition occupied four months, and it was published by Messrs Edmonston & Douglas towards the end of 1873.

The early part of this year was clouded by the death of Dr Thomas Guthrie, the preacher, philanthropist, and friend, whom Professor Blackie esteemed along with Chalmers and Macleod as apostolic. The very sight of him was energising, and his voice, uplifted always for

the right and against the wrong, or joyous in the interchange of friendly jest and story, strung men up to effort, or sweetened them into charity.

"I am the living to praise God," Dr Guthrie had written in December; "for it would be a deplorable thing if I had had to go through all the sufferings of the last nine weeks and should get no good from them." Less than three months later he had joined the ever-living to praise Him.

In "The Generous Evangelist," a poem made known at the time in 'Good Words' and elsewhere, and finally em bodied in 'Songs of Religion and of Life,' the Professor recorded—

How in the rough-hewn Scotsman dwelt
  The word of God with power.

This man smells not of books. A green
  And lusty show he bears;
As one whose foot hath wandering been
  Where vitalising airs

Sweep the far-purpled hills. His God
  He cabins not in creeds;
But feels Him where the fir-trees nod,
  And where the south wind speeds

O'er blossomy fields. In waves and winds
  For Gospel texts he looks;
And in the hearts of men he finds
  What no man found in books.

A continued tussle with the Sanskrit grammar varied the work of non-academical hours, and its effects are manifest in its wider treatment of all subjects connected with the growth of language. His own annotated copy of the second edition of 'Self-Culture' has constant marginal references to the ancient Sanskrit literature and philosophy of education and conduct, and several of the

papers published a year later in the 'Horæ Hellenicæ' bear evidence of this adventure towards the sources of European speech. It was by no means an exploration, and his object was not research. It was rather to glean from the labours of pioneers as much of their acquisitions as his mind, trained in language, could assimilate without difficulty.

He was busy inculcating his own large views of natural methods in acquiring Greek, and a note from Robert Browning in January, conveying the poet's thanks for hospitality shown to a friend, contains a sympathetic sentence:—

> I altogether believe in your theory of the necessity of speaking out what ought properly to live in speech—as it exclusively must at first have done.

A lecture on the whole subject of Education belongs to March 7. It was delivered at Broughty Ferry, and offered eleven propositions as a scheme of reform, "whose truth," said the 'Pall Mall Gazette,' "is only equalled by their profanity,"—which meant boldness in the face of pedantry hallowed by the dry-rot of ages, or jubilant over-cram, its mushroom product.

A short visit to Professor Campbell Shairp broke the journey home. "Two such splendid days, with a grand expanse of sea to look out on from these sea-topping terraces, and such nice people within, so full of love and intelligence and grace, both Scotch saving grace and Greek decorating grace!" He returned to Edinburgh to revise his paper on the "Pre-Socratic Philosophy" for 'Fraser's Magazine,' and to wind up all his business at the University, where another blast of the trumpet on Educational Reform closed the session.

His nephew, Alexander Blackie, for many years like a

son to him and to Mrs Blackie, had reached the point of choosing a career, and had decided on entering one of the larger mercantile houses in Leith, London, or Liverpool, as fortune might decide. To fit him for acceptance, it was necessary to give him an opportunity of acquiring more German than grammars and exercises bestow. It was therefore planned to spend the summer months in Germany, and mainly at Göttingen.

The party took steamer from Leith to Hamburg, and were established in pleasant quarters at Göttingen by the beginning of May. The Professor cast the slough of all customary duties and causes, and flung himself heartily into the University life, attending Dr Pauli's lectures on History, and Professor von Seebach's summer course on Geology. It was an old study revived, and one which made his walking tours a constant delighted perusal of nature's cipher. He sat on the benches with the class, as true a Bursch as any; and shouldered his knapsack, hammer in pocket, for excursions to the Harz, which Seebach organised to bring his students face to face with facts. As interesting to him were Dr Pauli's historical tours to Hildesheim, Brunswick, and Wolfenbüttel, and his observations were duly despatched to the 'Scotsman,' in whose columns they appeared.

By the end of August they were back in Edinburgh, and on their way to Altnacraig. Gaelic, Erse, and Sanskrit mingled their vexed currents in a maelstrom of autumn study, relieved by the proofs of 'Self-Culture,' and by a digression to Bismark as a worthy topic for provincial lecture. As the year advanced, the success of his little book brightened its close. Letters from all sorts and conditions of men greeted its author.

It is all gold [wrote Sir Theodore Martin], and I would like to see it in the hand of every young man in the three kingdoms.

The only point in which I differ from you is your estimate of Thackeray.

I like much its sound practical wisdom and its deep reverence [wrote Dr MacGregor].

Send me five copies [commissioned Bishop Wordsworth in a letter to Mr Douglas], one for myself, like Solon not yet too old to learn from wiser men, and one for each of my four sons.

The Professor spent the New Year of 1874 in Liverpool, where his nephew had been received into the large and influential business of Messrs Balfour & Williamson. On his return a new "cause" was presented to him, and after some natural hesitation he undertook its probationary championship. For some years he had agreed with other scholars in Scotland that gradual extinction threatened the Gaelic language, and that its disappearance would mean a serious loss to all philology, and to the whole body of literary and artistic thought and suggestion.

An attempt had already been made by leading Free Churchmen, amongst whom should be mentioned Dr M'Lauchlan and Mr Alexander Nicolson, to ensure the scholarship of the country against this inevitable calamity. But the agent who had been employed for a year to rouse attention to the matter was not sufficiently notable to succeed, and an appeal for co-operation was forwarded to Professor Blackie. The idea was to found a Celtic Chair in the University of Edinburgh, whose occupant should make the whole group of Celtic dialects the subject of academical lectures, with particular care for Gaelic. Professor Blackie had already studied Gaelic to good purpose both conversationally and through its literature, and was at one with this wise foresight and scholarly purpose. But he had not sufficient confidence in his own capacity for business to be willing at once to undertake the collection of a fund sufficiently large for endowment. At least £12,000 would be required, and the

money already collected was a very trifling instalment of this sum.

Urged by his friends of the Free Church on the ground of his known enthusiasm for Gaelic, of his position, of the welcome given to his appearance on all platforms and in every circle, Professor Blackie came at last to realise that he was probably the only man likely to succeed in this enterprise, and he consented to be the mouthpiece of its promoters, on the conditions of tentative success and of perfect independence in the performance of his mission. He decided, as a first step, to run up to London in March, and to sound the weightier merchants, peers, and proprietors of Scottish origin concentrated there. Another motive for this hasty visit to London was the publication of 'Horæ Hellenicæ,' which Messrs Macmillan accepted for the spring season. This book was a collection of essays on various points of Greek research which he considered to have received inadequate treatment at the hands of the more speculative modern scholars. Some of them had already done service in the form of lectures, others had appeared in learned periodicals. Two of them advocated the views of modern Greek and of classical accent which were now associated with his name; one treated of the use of hexameters in English verse; others concerned modern theories on Greek mythology and on the origin of language; and the rest engaged controversially against Mr Grote's defence of the Sophists and his heterodox handling of the Spartan constitution. The volume was dedicated to Mr Gladstone, who accepted the compliment with pleasure, although on many points he dissented from the Professor's conclusions.

A visit to the city resulted in several promises of £100 each to the fund for a Celtic Chair, and the success of this preliminary canter decided him to run the race for a year.

His business done, he returned to Edinburgh and to the work of the closing session. His study in Erse determined him to see Ireland in the summer, and he left Hill Street at the end of April 1874 with purpose and preparation complete. But three weeks had first to be given to his friend Mr Archer, who wished to paint his portrait, and he halted in London in the artist's hospitable home. Two hours of every morning were devoted to the "counterfeit," which took shape in an excellent picture of the Professor, swathed in the wonted plaid, and standing amid scenery suggestive of some nook in a Highland glen. The attitude was chosen as suited to "bring out the character of a man who thinks best on his legs." He found the process purgatorial, and avenged himself by a perfect whirl of afternoon and evening activity. Meetings of the Education Commission alternated with gaieties. "Jowett and Sewell were there, with their smooth English faces and cold English reticence."

The most interesting episodes were the customary visit to Dr Manning, and an encounter with Mr Bradlaugh—men at the opposite poles of opinion, whose friendly relations with the Professor testify more than words to his large-hearted tolerance, and to that swift recognition of the divine in man which was never troubled by shallow censure or ignorant scare.

This morning, after I stood for the counterfeit of my bony hand and significant knuckles, I swung down to Westminster, where Archbishop Manning now has his palace, a house as he modestly calls it, on the Vauxhall Bridge Road. He was extremely agreeable and full of telling anecdotes; with him only two theological students and the editor of the 'Tablet,' yclept Rankin, a very intelligent man: so that betwixt us, round a well-spread luncheon table, a brisk fire was kept up. The Archbishop is to give me a letter of introduction to the Bishop of Tuam, who is a famous Celt, and has made an Irish translation of the 'Iliad.' I want to get into the midst of the regular hot and bright Irish, and to avoid all Saxon solicitations.

He met Charles Bradlaugh at Mrs Gregory's.

No ghosts! [he records], but some dozen of strange, stray characters, and among others Bradlaugh, whom she [Mrs Gregory] conceits herself to be able to convert—catching a bull with a cobweb! A bull verily—a big Ajax, tall and broad. Having a fancy for looking closely at nature, I determined to go and hear him preach in his atheistic church on Sunday evening at the East End. It was a notable exhibition. A terrible tearing assault against the Book of Exodus, and its anthropomorphic representations of the unseen God; eloquence powerful and fervid of the first order. Really a remarkable man, and from his point of view triumphant over those who hold by the *infallibility of the record*, instead of the *Divinity of the dispensation*. He made incidentally a public profession of atheism, which caused me to write him a long letter. I imagine that in the Socratic way I may be able to do him some good. He is a manly, honest fellow, and quite worthy of gentlemanly treatment, which I am afraid he seldom receives.

The letter was courteously answered by Mr Bradlaugh. "I would like to convince you that my atheism is neither shallow nor flippant. Spinoza, whom you name, has been in much my revered teacher." The "Socratic way" scarcely justified its antique reputation; but had men earlier struck hands with Charles Bradlaugh and bade him welcome in the name and charity and insight of God, as this sweet-hearted Christian did at their first encounter, can we doubt the result? Here is the record for May 4 and 5:—

I lunched with Browning—charming, fine, manly, frank fellow, full of sense and eloquence, and overflowing with Greek. In the evening I dined with Murray, Albemarle Street, in a room hung round with portraits of Byron, Lockhart, Southey, and all the famous Tories of the last generation. To-day I breakfasted with Froude, who is just popping off for a summer retreat in Wales. He gave me some hints about Ireland, and was very bland and wise. Then I came home and spelt my Irish Bible for an hour and a half, and thereafter started off to lunch with Donald Fraser in that region of stately dreariness and cold formality called Bayswater. But mine host was all warmth and cordiality, and we were extremely jolly—he, I, and the Rev. Robert Taylor.

The month wore into the middle with dinners and lunches here and there, and with a raid amongst the publishers to find one willing to bring out a philosophical work by Dr Robert Wyld, and another to launch a little volume by Miss Christina Blackie on the 'Etymology of Place-names.' The good genius in the latter case was Mr Isbister, although Mr Murray undertook the second edition, and the Professor wrote a preface to the educational part of the book. A letter to his sister from Stepney contains news of his success on her behalf, and gossip about his gaddings to and fro. "I take to the dissipation quite easily. It is mere trifling when compared with the digging at Sanscrit roots in dark Hill Street!"

At a luncheon with Lady Burdett Coutts he met the Duke of Sutherland, who broached the subject of crofts and crofters, and invited him to come to Dunrobin in October. He accepted the invitation, but afterwards wrote to the Duke to explain that he was an ardent upholder of the crofters, and had written, spoken, sung much and at many times to that effect. The invitation was repeated, and the visit eventually paid. On May 13 he lunched at Niddry Lodge with Campbell of Islay,—

> the finest fellow that I have seen here, full of a free, frank, broad, vigorous, and hilarious manhood. He is great in Celtic and in geology; and can use a painter's brush to purpose besides. In the evening I swung down to Cheyne Row and had an hour's talk with stout old Carlyle, who is flailing about him in the same one-sided magnificently unreasonable way that you know. Of course I protested against that sort of thing *in toto*; and ended by putting myself under the wing of Aristotle, who, if not a greater genius, is certainly a much wiser man, than Carlyle.

An "amazing event," as he describes it, detained him in town. This was an appointment with the American publisher of his 'Four Phases of Morals' and 'Self-Culture,'

who insisted on putting £50 in the Professor's pocket. Later on the same day he met Mr Gladstone,—

and we had much interesting talk about Celtic and Saxon elements in British blood, about the recent excavations at Troy, and other subjects. I presented to him an elegantly bound copy of my new book ['Horæ Hellenicæ'], which he received graciously, and said that I had paid him a great compliment. To which of course I replied that he had furnished my front leaf with a great ornament.

Mr Archer let him go at last, on condition of his bond to return at Christmas for further sittings, and he sped away to Gloucester to pay Mr Dobell a passing visit. He found his friend in fragile health, but without portent of the end, so near.

From Nailsworth he went to Wales to renew some friendships there, in hasty fashion, with loins girt and staff in hand. On May 23 he started for the Green Isle.

It is a sad thing to part from so much beauty, brightness, and goodness, but a glimpse of excellence is a joy for ever in memory. Dolabella is as full of grace and simplicity and gentleness and bright-eyed intelligence as ever.

At Dublin his host was an old acquaintance called Dr Dobbin, who lived in the suburbs about a mile from Donnybrook. He took a little cottage for the Professor, who wished to spend some peaceful and studious hours every day; but this was made impossible by the rush of hospitality. He gave up his struggles with Erse and his hopes of solitary explorations in and round about the city, and let himself go on the current of Irish kindness, not without a little grumbling at its force. He had come to Ireland, already weary of being lionised, to inquire and to study. But he enjoyed his dinners with the Provost of the University, with Professor Dowden, and with Professor Mahaffy. Besides these academical hosts, the acquaintance to which he most cordially responded was the well-known specialist, Sir William Wilde.

An enthusiastic antiquary, with his head full of old castles, old chapels, old sepulchres, and every sort of curious lumber consecrated with millennarian dust. He is a tall, blithe, frank, and very intelligent fellow. Yesterday I called on his lady, who is a poetess, and very tall. She has an admiration for my 'Æschylus,' and of course for myself!

Dinners with the Wildes and "various notable Dublin intellectualities" followed, and he found it hard work to snatch moments from the flying hours in which to read Froude's and other Irish histories.

Dr Stokes, President of the Royal Irish Academy, piloted him through the Museum, and introduced him to his daughter, who was just then collaborating with Lord Dunraven at a work on the oldest architecture of Ireland. By this time he had changed his quarters from the suburban cottage to Mr Armstrong's house at Rathmines. Mr Erskine Nicol had furnished him with a heartily honoured introduction to his host. Together they

drove off to Drogheda, and, under the experienced captainship of Sir William Wilde, entered the subterranean chambers of famous, old, pre-Celtic kings, perhaps the oldest buildings in Europe, possibly older than the Pyramids, of which they are rude types. Sir William, a restless, keen-eyed old gentleman, who has all the district of the Boyne written on the volumes of his brain, snuffed and poked about.

The battle-field, the round tower, the Irish crosses, were all inspected.

Much as he enjoyed Dublin, he was glad to get quit of the "tussle of society," and to bid it farewell at a dinner with the Club of the Royal Irish Academy. His host escaped with him, and by June 9 they had put a hundred miles between them and the convivial capital, halting first at Cashel of the Kings.

I now feel the dear delight of no goad in this metropolis of old abbeys, castles, and round towers, and am soothed by a strange and

grateful feeling of quiet liberty after five weeks' driving and junketing and fretting about, and serving all things but my own sweet will.

From Cashel to Cork, from Cork to Queenstown, thence to the groves of Blarney, where he "kissed the Blarney stone with the end of a Platonic stick," were but stages on the way to Glengariff, Bantry Bay. Mr Armstrong returned to Dublin, and he settled down for some days to revel in the "Green Paradise," and to read the histories of Ireland which he had brought. They led him to make several excursions in the neighbourhood to identify the scenes of many a tragedy.

Everywhere in this country the memorials meet us of blood and bungling, of stupidity and swindling. One needs only to travel here to forgive the Irish all their follies.

He reached Kenmare on June 17, and stayed some days with Mr and Mrs Trench at Dereen, a visit which he thoroughly enjoyed in spite of the fact that the main conveyance was by yawl on the water, and that he held with the immortal to whom "a boat was a moving prison with a chance of being drowned." Here is a sea-adventure :—

We keep a yawl, and so long as the breeze keeps steady, ploughing the briny way is sufficiently pleasant; but then the breeze is like the Irish character, extremely impulsive and fitful, and it does not always blow in the right direction: this of course causes us to go by the longest possible road, technically called "tacking"; then the breeze, which is our sole dependence, without giving any warning, or assigning any substantial reason, will suddenly die away, and so we lie becalmed; and the night comes on, and though the stars twinkle blissfully in the blue sky, and the moon glances with poetical light over the lofty swelling waters, and the dip of the oar strikes fire from the phosphorescent billow, yet one does not feel exactly either easy in body or poetically moved in spirit. So we get out of our large craft and seek the shore in a small punt, which at every bound brings the greedy waters snapping at our upper vestments, not to mention porpoises and other sea-monsters gam-

bolling about all round us, blowing and snorting fearfully with their noses (if they have any), and threatening at every turn to upset our little prison with a flap of the tail, and set us at large liberty for ever in the deep Neptunian mansions. This is a literal picture of a voyage which we made last night home from a visit to one of the Saxon gentlemen who rent Celtic castles on the north side of the bay.

On June 22d he

saw Killarney lakes in the easiest and most effective way without losing a moment's time. The road from Kenmare comes close down upon the top of the lakes; so Mr Trench telegraphed in the morning that a boat should be sent up from the Lake Hotel to take me from the mail-car, and row me down through the whole range of the woody meanderings of those delightful waters.

He reached Limerick next day on the eve of St John, where he made

a march of discovery through the most ragged part of the town, and you may imagine the sensation I created appearing in my Edinburgh costume. Great crowds of boys are gathered about in corners lighting bonfires, to which I was invited by the bolder sort to contribute, but the greater part evidently did not consider me an approachable being. All stared,—some winked and grinned,—others burst out into open laughter,—and some fled in fear as from a bogle!

The appearance of his trim figure — in black surtout and plaid, with broad-brimmed hat and twirling stick, and feathery white hair blown about and over his collar, stepping, pausing, gazing, perchance singing, certainly uttering aloud his momentary emotions — must have filled the slums of Limerick on St John's Eve with awe and admiration.

A slow journey brought him to Tuam, where disappointment awaited him in the Archbishop's absence: but Father Bourke received him with all cordiality and reasoned discourse tempered by champagne. The next stage was Galway, on the shelves of whose College he

found 'Horæ Hellenicæ' newly planted. "The boys here have a custom of answering to everything 'All right!' but one finds generally that it is all wrong."

He left Galway, after a day's rest, for the Connemara hills, and settled down at Kylemore, where he enjoyed a spell of climbing and exulting in the grandeur and beauty of the Irish highlands.

The fogs were creeping about among the highest peaks, but I saw the wonderful variety of gleam and gloom that, as in Wester Ross, characterises this land of strangely intersected fell and flood.

Sunday occurred during his "soul's rest" at Kylemore.

I had a kindly whim to deliver to the excellent people a sermon. So they called some twenty or thirty from the neighbourhood together in the dining-room of Kylemore House. I led off with a psalm and a short prayer, and then discoursed on Hebrews xi., the drift of my discourse being to show that faith is an act of the practical reason in matters necessarily influencing the will, and leading to a persistent course of conduct in harmony with the belief in God and the divine order of the universe,—the identity of faith and work, or the necessary fatherhood of the one by the other, becoming thus evident.

His tour was at an end. It had been favoured by cloudless weather. Hurried although it was, and deflected from its purpose by overmastering hospitality, he had seen much and learnt much, and he came back sad at heart for Ireland.

Belfast and Edinburgh were but stages for Altnacraig, which he reached on July 4. His voyage in the Iona was depressing, and he was forced to seek shelter from the rain, and to find in Swinburne's 'Bothwell' some compensation for lack of movement. He was no critic of form and verse, and always insisted that a story should interest him, which the misfortunes of Queen Mary failed to do. Perhaps his predilection for John

Knox extended to that "sair sanct's" detestation of contemporary crowned women.

> It seems to me [he wrote to his aunt] that a woman cannot be a politician, or live amongst politicians, without becoming either bad or miserable.

His friend Sydney Dobell breathed his last "in blessed quietness" on the 22d of August 1874, and he was at once entreated to hold himself in readiness to pay the last honours to the form which had held that urbane and delicate spirit. He went to the funeral, which took place on September 1 at Painswick, and afterwards wrote a short account of the poet,—"a man of most pure, generous, and altogether noble character."

The summer of 1874 was singularly fine, and Mr Hutcheson organised a series of all-day excursions to and from Loch Scavaig and Skye. He invited the party at Altnacraig and a contingent of friends, visitors to Oban, to make the first trip with himself. At six in the morning the steamer left Oban pier, and at ten in the evening it returned. It was a day to be well remembered: a sea like glass; a shoal of mackerel pursued into a shallow bay and leaping like frothed silver on the waters; tumbling porpoises; the rock-bound coast of Skye, the fresh waves of Loch Scavaig, where a wind seems ever in ambush; and the solemn blackness of Loch Coruisk. Dr Appleton, Mr M'Lennan, Mr T. T. Stoddart, and Mr and Mrs Ross of Stepney were of the party, whose vagrant centre and stimulus was the Professor.

Not long after, Mrs Blackie invited the same party to a picnic at the old stronghold of the Lords of Lorne in Kerrera, Castle Gylen, — perched on the southern cliff, where currents divide and seas leap and roar when the wind sweeps the Atlantic. The talk was of Highland chiefs and their followers, of the loyal adhesion of older

times and its betrayal in days when "a four-footed people" is rated worthier than a clan of faithful hearts. They went back by boat along the Sound to high tea at Altnacraig, where songs wound up the day.

When the summer visitors left, the Professor went to Inveraray Castle, where the Princess Louise was staying with the Duke and Duchess of Argyll.

At 7.30 the most important event of the day took place. The Duke marched in first with the Princess, who had a beautiful gold chaplet on her head. Lord Halifax took in the Duchess; and to me was assigned Miss Wood, the daughter of his lordship, beautiful, bland, but not venturing out her horns before the majesty of a Professor of Greek. The rest of the party were Lord Percy and his spouse, Lord Colin, the Marquis, Lady Halifax, and more than half-a-dozen of young Argyll chicks with the most beautiful locks of flowing gold. After dinner we marched into the drawing-room, where I had to read my Gaelic translations to the Princess, which went off with manifest approbation. Nothing of special importance occurred. Lord Halifax seemed amused at the strong feeling which I expressed with regard to Bob Lowe and his wretched educational mechanics. The piper played, marching to and fro on the lawn, half an hour before dinner, and the same shrill swell of musical drones proclaimed itself at 8 A.M. this morning as a sort of cock-crow.

Next day he stayed at the Castle, reading up the Ossianic controversy while the rest of the party went picnicking to Loch Awe in a drizzling mist. At night he sang "Blücher" in the drawing-room.

The Princess is very agreeable, and I have long talks with her. She is an artistic creature, and not given to deal in discursive talk, but extremely frank and intelligent.

There is a tradition that he clapped her on the back and called her "a bonnie lassie," but it lacks written confirmation. Certain it is that he sent her an offering of his book 'On Beauty' when he went home.

After a fortnight at Altnacraig the trio left to make a tour in the north as far as Loch Shin before returning

to Edinburgh. Included in this were his visit to Dunrobin and a lecture on behalf of the Celtic Chair, delivered at Inverness.

The Duke of Sutherland [he wrote from Dunrobin] is a remarkable character, tall and big, but with a careless broad swing about him; not the least like a lordly English aristocrat. He is quite natural, easy, and affable in his manners, with a sort of indifference, however, that kills all airs and allays all apprehensions. He is not at all brilliant in conversation, but has a great amount of good sense and good humour, and has seen and tried a great number of things in a practical way. He is at present engrossed with gigantic agricultural improvements, with working a coal-mine, and with manufacturing bricks! He takes me all over his property, and lets me see what is being done, and keeps an eye on all that is going on. I forgot to say that he is breeding salmon also on a grand scale, nursing the young fry as carefully as we do delicate children, and having a nursery for them that holds not less than a million in their earliest and smallest stage.

While at Inveraray, he had spoken to the Duke and Duchess of Argyll about the Celtic Chair, and had received from them hearty encouragement in his effort "to stir Highland blood." In the north he continued to proclaim the cause, and held at Inverness the first public meeting on its behalf. Its success, and that of another at Glasgow towards the close of the year, decided him to undertake the work systematically, and he accepted the arduous post of collector pressed upon him by his Free Church friends.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CELTIC CHAIR.

1875–1876.

THE record of this movement from start to finish forms the main source for Professor Blackie's biography during the ensuing four years.

The matter had been relegated to the University Council as soon as he seriously undertook its promotion. A committee was formed, which included representatives of the Edinburgh University, of the Highlands, of Celtic scholarship, and of the Free Church. Sir Alexander Grant, Professor Masson, Cluny Macpherson, Mr Alexander Nicolson, Lord Neaves, and Professor Macgregor were its members. Professor Blackie was member and convener, as well as executor of its behests. Papers indicating the circumstances which made the preservation of Celtic dialects urgent, and fitted with blank pages for subscription-lists, were prepared and forwarded to all parts of the kingdom, as well as to all provinces and colonies of the empire where Highlanders were resident. These were accompanied by the Professor's personal appeal,—on behalf of the maintenance of Gaelic in the Highlands for the people; of the Celtic dialects in the University for the needs of philological study.

The schools consequent upon the new educational policy were—in all parts of the Highlands—sapping the very foundations of their language. Manned by English-speaking teachers, they condemned the children who did not understand English to sit side by side with those who did, to read the same lessons, and to profit by them as best they could. To little girls and boys who painfully learned to utter sounds which conveyed no meaning to them, the hours at school were an unredeemed penance. The teacher had no means of relieving their futility, for a knowledge of Gaelic was not a necessary qualification for his post. At the expense of these early victims, however, the conviction was well stamped into the minds of the Highlanders that education, employment, success depended upon their losing the mother-tongue and adopting that of the Sassenach law-maker.

We hear much, and with some indignation, of interference with the languages of Poland, Finland, and such outlying lands of imperial rule; but the process went on in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland with a slow, sure, and impalpable tyranny. To arrest its mischievous pressure, and to save Gaelic from extinction, was as much the aim of the "Apostle of the Celts" as was the mere academic rescue of its language and literature. He addressed himself to a more concentrated study of these than hitherto, — communicated with every available scholar whose proficiency was by right of birth as well as by right of inclination,—sought out the local poets and archæologists, with whom remained the treasure of traditional lore, —and translated himself passages from the Ossianic poems, and lyrical, heroic, or elegiac songs from the Highland "makers" of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mr Campbell of Islay was one of his helpers; and Alexander Nicolson, the loyalest Celt, the truest friend, the sweetest

singer of his clan, gave him unwearied assistance in disentangling the historical from the mythical in the mass over which he pored.

Along with his studies went his public advocacy, and together they took the concrete form of public lectures. In Scotland the lecture was on Gaelic and its literature, in England it was on the English language with its Celtic elements. They were delivered wherever the platform of an institute, club, or society was opened to him. He charged a fee of from five to ten guineas, according to the finances of the association, and this money went to swell the fund for the Celtic chair. Wherever this duty led him he awoke enthusiastic response, and during the first half of 1875 subscriptions poured into the fund, and their acknowledgment, banking, and booking occupied a considerable portion of his time. By the month of May £4000 stood to the credit of his cause. The Dukes of Argyll and Sutherland, the Mackay clan, the Celtic Society of Glasgow, Mr Duncan M'Neill, The Chisholm, the Marquis of Bute, Mr Fraser Mackintosh of Drummond, Mr Lachlan Macdonald of Skeabost, Mr Barbour, Mr Duncan Smith, Mr Mackinnon, Mr Hall, the Royal Celtic Society of Edinburgh, and Mr C. Morrison contributed £100 each to this sum; and professors, Highland proprietors, doctors, lawyers, and others made up its complement. It is scarcely delicate, however, to give a detailed list of those who, by prompt giving, made their gifts of double worth, and gave a foretaste of the supplies whose stream his advocacy released. From all quarters came backing for his cause,—from Travancore in India; from Darjeeling and Ceylon; from Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and Newfoundland; from Rio de Janeiro, Chicago, San Francisco, and Illinois; from Skye, the Lews, Barra, and the sterile islets of the west; from theatres and banks and post-offices

and police-stations; from clubs and regiments and Highland gatherings; from the richest and the poorest; from her Majesty the Queen, and from Highlanders who could offer only their scanty pence sent in the form of postage-stamps. And with every contribution, great and small, came the same generous enthusiasm, the same ardent gratitude, the same rich meed of admiring encouragement.

It was to the Duke and Duchess of Argyll that Professor Blackie owed her Majesty's cordial interest in his undertaking—an interest expressed in a donation of £200 towards the fund, as well as in her gracious command to be informed from time to time of his success.

The year 1875 began with public meetings, — that at Inverness being perhaps the most notable, although the Professor was not himself present. Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, Mr Davidson of Tulloch, Bishop Eden, Mr Jolly, and Dr Carruthers roused the neighbourhood with their speeches. By the end of the University session so great progress had been made with the fund that the Council formed a new and larger committee, to which Dr M'Lauchlan, the translator of the Dean of Lismore's collection of Gaelic verse, was added. Dr Clerk of Kilmallie, the most recent of the translators of Ossian, was also requested to join its ranks, and the Committee addressed itself to the work of widening the circle of enthusiasm already reached.

The Professor himself left Edinburgh for the south at the end of April, and after a journey whose dulness was enhanced by an exasperating effort to master Browning's 'Aristophanes' Apology,' he reached Birmingham, welcomed at the station by "a band of honest Highlanders," and stayed there a couple of days to lecture for the Chair. The next step was to London, where he made his home with the Archers. A promise weighed painfully on his mind, that of writing a notice of Mr Dobell's poems just

published. Love for his friend did not blind him to their defects, and after a prolonged study, he decided to put off an uncongenial task for the present. He could not praise immoderately, and he feared to wound by a critical estimate.

Mr Archer's portrait of him was now in the Academy's Exhibition, and was much admired. The usual whirl of engagements swept him into its vortex, and he spent all May, with a short interlude, in lunching, dining, breakfasting with friends new and old. The only time he could rescue for his Gaelic study was a morning hour in bed, but every visit paid was an opportunity for "making a victim" to the cause. In several of his letters we discover anxiety about the foxgloves at Altnacraig, and directions for new sowing and transplanting into sheltered nooks of this favourite flower.

A charming letter from Mr Isaac Taylor brought him a contribution on May 19:—

You have heard [wrote the genial vicar] the story of the widow's mite. I am, as you correctly observe, "a poor devil," and you will see by the enclosed papers that my last year's stipend amounted to the sum of £1, 14s. 1d. Well, to show you the interest I take in your Celtic Chair, I will, like the widow, give it ALL!!!—the only condition being that you must come and fetch it, according to your promise. What are the paltry hundreds and fifties of your great Highland lairds after such munificence? I think I ought to be put in a tract as an example to others.

He rushed north to Edinburgh on May 27 to speak at both Presbyterian Assemblies; and having acquitted himself manfully to thunders of applause, he dined with the Lord High Commissioner on the 29th, and took the night train back to London. Next day he

lunched with Sir Kenneth Mackenzie, whose wife is sister of that noble Celt, John Campbell of Islay; and then I called on Murray the publisher, who gave me a present of Schliemann's book on Troy,

and on Macmillan (two future victims of the Celtic Chair), on the Marquis of Huntly, and on Dr Dyce Duckworth, a pledged victim.

On June 2 came the Duke of Argyll's letter with the welcome news of the Queen's subscription, "accompanied by a warm expression of approval on her Majesty's part"; and on June 6 a great public luncheon was given at Willis's Rooms to further the fund, the Marquis of Huntly presiding.

Next day he was in Oxford, and wrote to Mrs Blackie :—

Archer and I arrived here last night. After breakfast to-day an hour was spent over the last notes of my imminent lecture, and then I marched forth to the new Museum of Natural History. There I waited till the Marquis of Lorne and dear Dr Acland came in, and at twelve exactly we entered the lecture-room, which was quite full of dons and ladies, the grave and the beautiful gracefully blended. I made a proper apology for having invited myself to lecture to such a distinguished audience, and commenced my philologic fire without further ceremony. The audience was most sympathetic and attentive; and I concluded after an hour's talking by reciting two of my own poetical translations from the Gaelic poets, which met with responsive rounds of pedestrian applause, even from the tall, majestic, and grave Dean of Christ Church, who was sitting exactly before me. When I sat down the Marquis stood up to pronounce the triumphant eulogy of the Pro.! After lecture I went with Dr Acland to lunch with the members of the Royal Family who are living in his house. I sat between the Duke of Connaught and Prince Leopold, both pleasant and agreeable young men. From the open window of the lunching-room we walked into a garden of such luxuriant greenery as England alone can show, in the midst of which the Princess and Mr Acland and the Argyll ladies were sitting at tea under a bower through which the sun shot the most delicate radiance. I sat beside the Princess Louise, whom I love much: she is so frank and unaffected, and so tastefully but plainly adorned. While discussing the tea some talk arose about the pronunciation of Latin, and I sung one of the Odes of Horace to a well-known Scotch tune. We then adjourned to the gardens of Worcester College, where there was a grand exhibition of flowers; and now I am in the cool shade of the Rugby club-room, writing to my dearie. To-night we go to an evening party at the Aclands', where we shall rub shoulders with

Royalty again, and feel less inclined than ever to pull down the Established Church or to dethrone the Queen! To-morrow is Commemoration. I shall see the shows here, and return to London with the afternoon train. On Thursday I breakfast with Gladstone, and take the night train to Edinburgh.

At Dr Acland's party,

who came in but Ruskin, and we embraced publicly! The man is overflowing with goodness, but fond of asserting extreme and one-sided opinions. I love him. Oxford has widened her jacket considerably since I first knew it; has been forced, indeed, like Noah's ark, to admit all sorts of beasts, clean and unclean, being, as the 'Daily News' has it, ethereal enough to admit Mr Ruskin, and Scotch enough to tolerate Professor Blackie!

He was back at Altnacraig by the middle of June, struggling with a pile of letters which had accumulated during the few days of his detention in Edinburgh. Of these the most interesting, unconnected with the Celtic Chair, was one from his friend Mr William Jolly, H.M. Inspector of Schools for the Highlands, who had made his home in the neighbourhood of Inverness. This contained an invitation to join a tour of inspection in the Outer Hebrides—the Uists and Barra—a month later.

You would see these remarkable Atlantic lands [wrote Mr Jolly] beneath the great ocean breezes, unadulterated from the American shores and the Gulf Stream; visit the scattered schools, in which you can give full play to your Gaelic; be treated with the ancient hospitalities of the brave Clan Ranald; be tossed on the billows of the open sea in the light strong boats of the good fishermen there; in short, have pleasant, happy, strange, instructive, educational, and unique experiences.

The invitation was promptly accepted, and the intervening weeks were used to put into literary form the results of the Professor's researches into the history and literature of the Highlands. He had wished Mr Campbell of Islay to be a candidate for the Celtic Chair in due season, but

the suggestion did "not smile" upon his friend, who wrote on June 19:—

I would not sit in that chair for £100,000 a-year. There was a man in a tale I wot of who was found by the hero in a field breaking big stones by sitting on them. When the princess was fairly won, a traitor king prepared a chair with a steel spike in it for the hero, who had engaged the stone-crusher as henchman. The henchman sat in the chair, and the hero sat therein afterwards. I have not got a *Tonchruaidh* to prepare the seat for me, and I would not sit on spikes to be pelted with hard epithets by all the Gaelic scholars in the kingdom. When asked for my opinion, I will vote for the man best fitted to sit on spikes and be pelted with jaw-breakers.

On July 7 he took steamer for Inverness, and stayed with Mr Jolly for a few days. Here is the programme of their activities:—

To-morrow some driving about in the forenoon, and in the evening speechification; on Friday, the great day of the wool-market, public dinner, speechification, and, as I hope, pocket-picking; on Saturday, Glen-Urquhart and its beauties and hospitalities; on Sunday, perhaps Dingwall; on Monday, Portree; and in Skye generally till next Saturday.

Here I am [he wrote on July 10], halfway between Inverness and Glen-Urquhart, where we shall arrive before nine and take breakfast with Major Grant, a ruddy-faced soldier, full of vigour and heartiness, and a good Celt—as all the best-hearted and most manly men in the Highlands are those who have the kindest side to the traditions, character, and language of their fathers. The meeting of the Ossianic Society on Thursday night was a bumper affair. Mr Fraser-Mackintosh was in the chair, giving an element of dignity to the meeting. At 4 P.M. yesterday we took dinner with the big sheep-lairds and a whole host of people of a very different complexion from the Pro.; but contrast is stimulating and variety agreeable. Fraser-Mackintosh was again in the chair; next to him Lochiel, and next the Pro. and Mr Jolly. It was a very laudable sort of dinner, being despatched—including speeches—in two hours. Lochiel spoke excellently, and the Pro. as usual was "characteristic"!

On Monday they made their way by Strome Ferry and Broadford to the manse of Blaven, a first hospitable stage

in Skye. The weather changed to drenching rain, and their progress by boat, by dog-cart, and on foot was made

resigned to the fate of ducks. Nothing else disagreeable has occurred, only a certain obtrusive amount of attention, an everlasting too-muchness. Half an inch of butter on the bread is delighful, but a whole inch revives the wish for a dry crust.

This suggests fatigue. Hospitality greeted the travellers in all nooks of Skye, which they left on the 19th for North Uist, spending three days on the treeless island, in whose churchyard he found the grave of a native poet and wit mentioned by Macpherson.

We then proceeded some six or seven miles till we came to the shore of the long *faodhla* that separates North Uist from Benbecula. It is a long arm or stretch of the sea overflowing the flat land at full tide, but leaving it dry at low water and half-tide; so we had the strange experience of walking across from the one island to the other literally on the sea-bottom, and with a vivid impression of what happened to Pharaoh, King of Egypt, when he made a similar transit across an arm of the Red Sea. It was market-day in Benbecula, and as our transit was made late in the afternoon, we had the satisfaction of seeing large cavalcades of the natives with long strings of cattle coming across the briny flat, and with the high mountains and S.E. cones of N. Uist making a picture worthy of the best moments of Faed. The men, mounted on goodly and most serviceable ponies, are big-boned and massive, and regularly Roman in their noses. The people here generally seem made of good stuff; they are strong and large rather than handsome.

From Benbecula Mr Jolly's duties led them to South Uist, whence the Professor wrote on July 28:—

This is the place where Flora Macdonald was born, and we are just returned from visiting the ruins of her cottage, all grown over with nettles, and dock, and burdock, and rank grass. Enclosed is some grey lichen and forget-me-not from the inside of the ruins. I took off my hat and kissed the large grey stone at the door of the house. On Tuesday we ascended Mount Hecla, the highest point of S. Uist, and had a splendid view of the expatiation of desolation of which this island principally consists. On Saturday we cross to Barra.

The tour had been utilised for lectures at Portree and Drimisdale to Skye and South Uist audiences. It came to an end in Mull about the middle of August.

Many years earlier Professor Blackie had vowed to see a new part of Scotland every summer if possible, and he had made good his purpose hitherto, contenting himself with short visits to as yet unknown localities, when his intervals from the pressure of many engagements were few and brief. This year, however, in Mr Jolly's instructive and pleasant company, he covered a larger area than usual.

On his return to Altnacraig he found a letter commanding his presence at Inveraray Castle, where the Queen was staying. Her Majesty wished to learn from his own lips the results which he had hitherto attained in advocating the Celtic Chair. His luggage had gone astray, and the summons was immediate. He was starting cheerfully, minus his dress clothes, when at the last moment his portmanteau appeared on the coach, and his confidence in the "natural course of things" was justified. He got safely through the audience, and the Queen sent her birthday-book for his signature and motto the following morning. He wrote both Greek and Gaelic texts after his name.

The autumn was given to his book on Gaelic literature, to the session work, to Celtic Chair business, and to lectures at Newcastle, Kirkcudbright, Carlisle, and Liverpool. An extract from the minutes of the General Council of the Edinburgh University gives us the date 29th October 1875 for the Council's acknowledgment of the report of the Celtic Chair Committee, and their approval of the investment of sums already collected, with their authority for the investment of further sums on similar security, in the names of the Principal of the University,

Professor Blackie, and Mr Donald Beith, W.S.,—the last-named gentleman acting as treasurer to the fund.

The habit of rhyming, which acted as a safety-valve to his emotions and just indignations, laid up a store of verses, the harvest of long journeys, of pedestrian tours, of overwhelming impressions, which demanded issue in book form every few years. In time for a New Year's gift to his wife appeared 'Songs of Religion and of Life,' which included the "Generous Evangelist" already mentioned, as well as a number of poems belonging to former publications. Amongst the contributions freshly minted were some hymns, which combined a very true reverence of feeling with a rather combative expression. His ire was roused by the sacerdotalism which, while a prescribed factor in certain Church systems, is too apt to creep into those Churches whose very watchword is liberty from its oppression. The Free Church of Scotland was notorious at the time for the personal pronouncement of dogma as from men having authority, and much of the matter in these verses which hurts the reader's sense to-day was provoked by a kind of parochial Popery when they were written. They represent a mood provoked by clerical presumption, rather than a dispassionate and reverential utterance on their supreme themes.

Some of the Songs of Life better express his joyous, grateful, deep-seated adoration, and amongst them "A Song of Summer," "Farewell to Summer," "A Song of Three Words," and "The Garden" are true and spontaneous strains. But at the time the volume comforted many hearts sore with the fitful prevalency of intolerance and ignorance, and may be held to have done service in its season. The Rev. John Pulsford wrote of it:—

Songs sung into you by heaven and earth, and the Sacred Spirit, which weareth both, will sing something into me. God bless you,

and relate you, and me too, more and ever more intimately to the Fountain of all musical truth, and make us clearer voices of its all-including harmonies, for the glory of the Good One, and the quickening and refreshment of His children.

And Sir Theodore Martin, to whom a specially inscribed copy was sent, responded with words of vivid affection :—

The ties which have now for so many years bound us have never been relaxed or broken. There are few things in my life I value more than your friendship—few on which I look back with more satisfaction. What a happy thing it has been for a man immersed like me in the exacting labours of professional life, that I made such friends as yourself, and cherished the tastes which such friendship implies!

The work of the fund went on apace. It led the Professor into fierce conflict on the Ossianic question. His advocacy of the Gaelic language, Dr Archibald Clerk's new translation of Ossian, and Dr Hately Waddell's 'Ossian and the Clyde,' had revived the whole question of Macpherson's sincerity. The Professor inclined to Dr Clerk's views, and plunged into the fray against all comers, conspicuously against Mr Campbell of Islay, a humorous and delightful antagonist. Their pens crossed and shivered all the spring and summer of 1876, Mr Campbell refusing to believe in Macpherson's Gaelic, which his opponent respected as partly ancient and partly modern, holding that those epical fragments which were taken down from recitation had suffered the time-change that affects all vernaculars.

Two notes from distinguished contributors to the fund belong to this time, and should be quoted. One is from Dr John Brown, ever the "beloved physician" to those who knew him :—

This is all I can give [he wrote]; you are a happy and victorious man, clad with zeal as with a cloak.

Professor Lushington's letter runs :—

My dear Homerophil,—It is a singular spectacle when the most *sonnenklar* truths escape the ken of the keenest critics. You, trans-

lator and commentator of Homer, have missed the obviously true meaning of some noted passages: it is not given to every man to know himself, and the only possible solution of your failing to discover the true reading must be that *you are* the true reading.

ΝΙΓΡΕΥΣ αὖ Κελτῶν ἡγήσατο βαρβαροφώνων
Νίγρεὺς Ἀγλαΐης υἱὸς Χ·ἄ·
Νίγρεὺς ὃς κάλλιστος ἀ·ὑ·Γ·ἦ·
ὃς καὶ χρυσὸν ἔχων πολεμόν δ' ἷεν ἡὔτε κόρη,
αἰὲν ἀναιδείην ἐπιειμένος. ὥς ποτ' ἐπηύχει,
ἦλθε δ' ἐπὶ πτωχὸς πανδήμιος Ἶρος ἀλήτης
Κελτικὸν ἵδρυσεν θρόνον ὑψίτερον Βαβυλῶνος,
σείσατο δ' ἐνὶ θρόνῳ ἐλέλιξε δὲ μακρὸν Ὄλυμπον.

Rendered in Sassenach by Professor Lushington,—

"Blackie led the Celts, grim hordes of speech uncouth;
Blackie, son of splendour, princely, bright-eyed youth,
Blackie, fairest warrior, came to battle laden
With gold he grabbed from all sides, like a radiant maiden.
The virtuous mail of impudence he donned right merrilie,
A universal beggar, a wordy Wanderer he;
He reared a lofty Celtic Chair, which Babel's Tower resembled,
And in the chair he shook himself, and earth and heaven trembled."

A lecture at Newcastle on "Bismark and Compulsory Military Service" varied the procession of lectures on Gaelic. It was given on February 4, and was fully reported in various journals. The report interested military men, and was circulated amongst them by Colonel Cunningham Robertson, who brought it to the appreciative notice of Sir Garnet Wolseley. But its fee was devoted to the Celtic Chair, and it deserves record rather because he "glorified blood and iron triumphantly in the face of a sweet Quaker hostess," and followed this feat up by a sympathetic visit to the Quakers' meeting, than for any lasting impression made by his belligerent "flourish."

Dr Walter C. Smith received a call from the Free High

Church of Edinburgh early this year, and "flitted" from Glasgow accordingly. The Professor, who missed Dr Guthrie, welcomed in his friend a poet and scholar, as well as pastor. He regularly attended the afternoon service in the High Church, and part of its value to him was in the walk afterwards with Dr Smith, and the talk upon deep matters of the spiritual life at his house. This became habitual, and there can be no doubt that to his pastor he opened a storehouse of inmost thought and feeling sealed up from the general eye. Not that he acknowledged him as one set in spiritual authority over him, for he held that every believer was a priest, and as such open, if he would, to the divine revelation; but they met in affectionate and mutual insight, to hold discourse on matters sacred to both.

The review of Sydney Dobell's poems, which he had found impossible the year before, engaged some hours of March, and he was able to imbue it sufficiently with the love and reverence which he bore to the man, to soften the honest rigour of his criticism on the poems. He was not a good judge of poetry, being prejudiced by adhesion to certain hard-and-fast standards.

It was in this month also that he began to lecture in Edinburgh and elsewhere on "Scottish Song," one of his favourite subjects for the last fifteen of his platform years. Across the Borders this address was always rapturously received on account of the genial gibes which it contained against his Anglified countrymen, who thought it vulgar to sing the songs of Burns, of Lady Nairne, and of the Ettrick Shepherd. In the earlier years of its deliverance he sang the illustrations himself, and no one who heard his rendering of "The Bonnie Hoose o' Airlie," or "Get Up and Bar the Door," or "Jenny Geddes," or "Kelvin Grove," or "Wooed an' Married an' a'," was likely to

forget it. His voice had lost some of its power and sweetness, but had greatly gained in dramatic expression, and this was enhanced by the vigorous play of feature and of hands, and by the sudden shifting from place to place —marching in time to heroic refrain—flinging himself into attitude, now as the lover, now as the yielding maiden, now as the arrogant foe, now as the brave defender. Here is a report of his appearance on the platform of the Scottish Literary Society :—

Long silvery hair and a wide turned-over shirt-collar recalled to memory the late Professor Wilson, but the resemblance ceased—unless, indeed, the good-humour pervading the finely cut features of Professor Blackie be taken, though differing in quality, to be the same as used to light up the more massive face of the immortal Christopher.

The fees for this lecture were paid into the fund for the Celtic Chair. It furnished matter for letters from a host of Scotchmen at home and abroad, ready to follow his standard in the fray. It is hardly possible to point to a single peaceful utterance by the Professor in public. His speeches and lectures are never tranquil expositions of their subjects. His rhetoric was ever launched against the foe, his vivacity was pointless unless shafted to pierce. They were bloodless blows indeed that he dealt, and extorted laughter from their victims, because, keen as he was and ready with taunt and challenge, he was utterly free from personal animosity, from rancour, and from envy, and was astonished when in fair verbal fight he drew wrath and invective to himself. He waged war on views and habits, on fashions and opinions, which he disliked, not upon persons,—although the names of persons figured in his diatribes as representative of their theories. A correspondence on the subject of Scottish music occupied some columns of the 'Scotsman' during the last week of March,

and the Professor contributed a letter on the 27th of the month which summed up his gospel thereanent,—a gospel to be preached in season and out of season for the remainder of his life.

On May 1 he read a paper to the members of the Royal Society on the subject of the Ossianic controversy, the report of which in the 'Scotsman,' meagre though it was, pleased Dr Clerk of Kilmallie greatly.

John Campbell will not answer you [wrote the translator],—he can't; but he will contradict you, and repeat his contradiction ten times over, though you should convince all the world except himself. He is a wonderful collector, but he does not know Gaelic with any degree of accuracy,—great "*circa Celtica*," nothing "*in Celticis*." I hope your lecture will be published separately and widely circulated. It will do a world of good.

"John Campbell" wrote:—

If you want to kick up more dust, send me a copy of your speech for review and I'll pitch into you. I will send you my writing, if I write, and you can get it printed if you like. What mean you by "scrappy"? I find that word together with "scratchy" applied to my own writings; but if Macpherson's materials were scraps, how about his grand Gaelic originals? May your coppers increase, and the basis of your chair be broad as the Pyramids of Egypt!

FAILTE!

Professor Campbell Shairp came from St Andrews expressly to hear the paper, and endorsed its argument with his agreement.

The Gaelic Society at Inverness elected the Professor as its chief about this time.

He was in correspondence with all the living versifiers in the Gaelic language, and was busy making translations from their works. "In sober truth," wrote Dugald Macphail, the Mull poet, and contributor to the 'Gael,' "I don't consider myself worthy of notice as a Gaelic poet. I love and admire the language, and these passions in-

tensify the more I study and know it." His poem on Mull is answer enough to this modest disclaimer:—

> "My blessing, fair Mull, shall be constant with thee,
> And thy green-mantled Bens, with their roots in the sea!"

John Campbell of Ledaig was an old friend, a neighbour indeed in summer, whose acquaintance visits to Connel Ferry had cultivated; and Mary Mackellar was an occasional visitor in Hill Street. Specimens of their verses are to be found translated by Professor Blackie and Sheriff Nicolson in the 'Language and Literature of the Highlands,' with whose concluding pages the author was now busy.

An Inquiry Commission for the Scottish Universities commenced its work in 1875, and he had been in correspondence with several of its members during the year. Its slow processes brought about in the end some of the reforms which he had demanded during nearly half a century, amongst them the preliminary examination for all students intending to qualify for a degree. A letter received in May from Mr J. A. Froude, who served on this leisurely Commission, is interesting rather from its frankly-admitted ignorance than from its value to the history of University Reform:—

Beyond having assented to a request that I would be a member of the Scottish Universities Commission, which I received some months ago, I have not heard another word about it. I know not who my colleagues are—or for what object the Commission has been appointed. You, it appears, know all about it. You know, or imply, that we are to sit in Scotland and not in London. You cannot do better than enlarge your present letter by giving me all the information which you possess. I am sorry to give you so much trouble, but to-morrow being Sunday, you will have leisure from all harder duties than listening to a sermon, and you can spare me a few minutes. My own ideas are the vaguest. I should like to see *one* Scotch University to be made really *brilliant* by Endowment,

and, if necessary, a grant from the Crown,—the four present Universities to relinquish their privilege of granting degrees and to become colleges. A change like this, however, may be undesirable for many reasons with which I am not acquainted. At any rate, I conceive no such scheme is likely to be preferred or listened to at present. We shall confine ourselves to less ambitious details, and I do not think that you and I are likely to differ widely about them.

The possibility of such a smiting hip and thigh of our Scottish Universities could have occurred only to the self-complacent provincialism of an Oxonian, and must have been received with Homeric laughter by the Professor. He watched the consultations of the Inquiry Commission, its resolution into three Executive Commissions, and their modicum of reform achieved, with unabated interest, and had much to say on the subject fifteen years later, when their course was run.

The summer was spent at Altnacraig, with excursions to Mull and Cantyre during parts of August and September. Dr and Mrs Hanna were amongst the summer guests, and Dr Robert Wyld was there on July 29, when the host's sixty-seventh birthday was kept, and he gave the toast at dinner in words of loving testimony to a friendship more than half a century old.

August 10 found him at Loch Baa, whence he wrote to Mrs Blackie:—

Since I came here I have been busied in a strange way. The wall of this unique establishment inside is all scrawled over with curious, significant sketches by John Campbell, Lord Colin, and Lord Archibald: also the Princess has tried her artistic hand and immortalised John Campbell at full length on the wall at the left side of the fireplace. There is a blank on the right, which, as soon as I came in, the quick eye of J. F. Campbell pounced on as a convenient niche for immortalising me; so down he sat, with me before him, and I am done off already on a sheet of brown packing-paper, to be cut out and pasted on the wall.

J. F. C. and I are examining glacial grooves and scratches, and discussing the ruin of Highland estates.

No doubt the Ossianic controversy waxed and waned o' nights, and Dr Cumming and Dr Hanna listened amazed to their explosive eloquence. By the 21st, Dr Hanna and the Professor had left Loch Baa for Calgary, near Tobermory,—"the most delightful, snug little sea-corner imaginable. If any place yet visited by me is entitled to be called the end of the world, it is Calgary. Send all such letters as are worth reading, not 'bothers' or 'blethers.'"

Back to Loch Baa on the 26th, when the whole party took to fishing, and the Professor, to his own great astonishment, caught an unspecified monster weighing a pound and a half. He stayed over a Sunday, and then started on foot for Ulva, Pennyghael, Salen, and Loch Buie, his consecutive halting-places, where he picked up cheques for the Chair.

Towards the middle of September he left Altnacraig again to give two lectures at Callander; and with short breathing-space he went to Balnakill near Tarbert, to pay Mr Mackinnon of the Oriental Company a visit, and to make from his house a thorough exploration of the Mull of Cantyre. His host, later Sir William Mackinnon, gave him £200 towards the Celtic Chair, a donation which only the Queen and Mr M'Lean of Redcastle in Otago, N.Z., had equalled.

When he returned to Altnacraig, it was "to gather up the fag-ends of the summer, and gird up loins for the winter."

The issue of his book on 'The Language and Literature of the Highlands' greeted his return to Hill Street. It was dedicated to her Grace Elizabeth, Duchess of Argyll. The Gaelic language with its imported elements occupied the first chapter, while the others dealt with its literature, ancient, medieval, modern, and immediate. Chapter IV. handled the Ossianic questions rather in the

spirit of impartial narration than of polemics, and may be read as genuine information, and as a somewhat rare specimen of the Professor in a neutral attitude. Perhaps the general clash of arms over Macpherson blunted his eagerness, for it is certain that he preferred to do battle single-handed, and that at signs of a backing he was apt to leave the field. On the whole, he leant to Dr Clerk's views, which in less judicial circumstances he was wont to advocate. The most interesting chapters of the book are those which treat of the Gaelic poets of Jacobite and later times,—Iain Lom, Macdonald, Duncan Ban, and Rob Donn.

The volume was cordially received, and helped on the fund which led to its preparation. Perhaps best worth quoting of the many congratulatory letters which he received is one from the late Duke of Sutherland:—

The book is most interesting to us Highlanders. And now I am going to scold you. Why did I not see you at Lairg this season? You would have enjoyed seeing what a large piece of land is under crop, and what Highland hands can do. You must come next season.

Early in November Professor Blackie attended a banquet in the Balmoral Hotel in honour of Mr R. H. Wyndham, for many years manager of the Theatre Royal in Edinburgh. Sir Alexander Grant was in the chair, and the guests numbered more than a hundred of the representative men of Scotland. The toast of "The Drama" fell to the Professor, and his speech was a full expression of his lifelong position towards the influential art. After alluding to a boyhood whose cravings for the theatre were starved by paternal interdict, he went on to state with reasoned eloquence his own estimate of the best drama:—

It is the only form of art which combines everything that makes a man a man; it combines lyric poetry and the narrations of epic

poetry; it combines the highest ideal of heroism and the most minute features in the variety of character in common life; it combines the good and the beautiful; it combines the instructive and the entertaining; it is the highest form of art, and if therefore any nation is not exalted in this form of art, it is not a nation to whom God has given the mission of preaching the highest things that belong to the human race. I have not been a habitual frequenter of the theatre, but whenever I could spare a free evening I have gone to see the play that had the run of the season, but I never went to see a play that had anything base or degrading in it. When I was in London five or six years ago there were two plays which had the run of the season; the one was called "Leah," and the other was called "The Bells." The whole moral of "Leah" is the evangelical virtue of forgiveness. And if it ever was possible for a preacher using the styles of conventional theology—if it was ever possible for him to make men feel the horror of a violated conscience, he could not present a sermon more impressive than is exhibited before us in that noble melodrama, "The Bells."

Is it not a strange thing that in modern times, with our high-strung religion, we have made a divorce between the stage and morality and religion, whereas in ancient times, growing out of mere joviality,—out of the harvest-home, as it were,—there came up a Greek tragedy, which became a pulpit from which you have sermons upon conscience which go to move the inner strings of the heart as much as any sermon which was ever preached? Recall the opening chorus of "Agamemnon," or read the choruses of "Eumenides," and tell me if it is not a most monstrous thing for men preaching the Gospel to say that there is anything in these tending to a divorce between the Church and the Theatre. Leave the theatre to drift, and depend upon it that if they who are God's servants do not know how to use it, the devil is far too clever a fellow not to use it for his own business. I beg to propose the modern Drama, and especially in its union with the Christian Gospel.

These were bold words to utter in the capital of Scotland, and they horrified the Free Churchmen of the north, against whom the speaker levelled many an interjected personality, better now omitted. The speech made a stir, not only amongst those who decried the stage, but, very naturally, amongst those actors who, loving their profession and honouring it, sought to save it from "the devil's

business." A sheaf of letters testifies to their interest in Professor Blackie's advocacy. From this sheaf one may be drawn for quotation, from Henry Irving. It is dated 12th November 1876 :—

Opinion will always differ [he wrote] about such matters, but on one point there can be no dispute, that the opening up the subject at this time, and in so genial a spirit, and with the endorsement of a name so honoured as your own, is a gallant act, for which all who respect the stage, as well as those who minister about the temple, must sincerely thank you,—and not those alone, but all who value an honest, manly expression of opinion. For myself, I became an actor because I loved the drama, and every word said in its behalf, as a great social power to elevate mankind, finds an echo in my heart. Tens of thousands feel the influence of the theatre during six days of the week—against the pulpit with only one day, and with relatively fewer listeners; and knowing this, all true moralists wish that this great power may be used for *good*. Nothing will more certainly tend to the elevation of the stage than the encouragement of men like yourself, whose judgment in matters referring to the culture of the generation growing up should be final.

CHAPTER XIX.

EGYPT.

1876-1879.

A CORRESPONDENCE in the 'Scotsman,' roused by Professor Blackie's poem called "Canaries and Creeds," indicates the troubled waters of theological controversy in Scotland during that year and those following. The epoch had its loud pretensions to infallibility, its response in the acclaim of the ignorant, its inquisitors, its traitors, its martyrs, its outcome of the triumph of a wider revelation for which its martyrs suffered, and for which they now are crowned.

Occupied with his College duties and with lectures at Galashiels, Linlithgow, and Govan, he was able to grant Mrs Blackie a very unwonted leave of absence in London, where a new but already greatly valued friend had claimed her presence. This was Miss Pipe of Laleham, who became acquainted with Altnacraig in the summer of 1876, and whose school in Clapham Park had for many years heralded and achieved the larger, stronger, and more radical education for girls, now become a commonplace of our time.

During his wife's absence many letters on the subject of his book on Gaelic reached him, and on her return he went north to Inverness for a couple of days on Celtic

Chair business. On this subject Mr Froude wrote to him early in February :—

If you are to preserve your native wild Flora, your Gaelic saxifrages and mountain roses, you must preserve them yourselves, as the Welsh do. You yourself are acting well and wisely in protesting against so interesting a relic of other times being allowed to die. But Gaelic, I suppose, can only be really kept alive like one of ourselves—by continuing to live. As long as songs and hymns are composed in Gaelic which have a hold upon the people, so long the language will subsist, and not, I suppose, longer.

Mr Froude was in Edinburgh again and again during the earlier months of 1877, as the Commission of Inquiry held its first sittings there, and the correspondents met oftener than once.

Another letter on the subject of his book came from Government House, Ottawa :—

How can I sufficiently thank you for having remembered me in my exile [wrote Lord Dufferin], and for sending me your charming volume, which, although it has only been three days in the house, I have almost run through? I was extremely interested in the philological part, and some of the ballads are very fine. I must also thank you in the name of all play-lovers for your defence of the Theatre. I do believe that if the salt of the earth were not to set their faces so against it, their countenance would do much, at all events, to keep a certain number of London theatres in the right path. On my way to British Columbia I got through the 'Odyssey,' and am now deep in Thucydides for the third or fourth time. One never tires of either, but I confess I have the bad taste to prefer the 'Odyssey' to the 'Iliad.'

The morning budget of letters deserves a passing word. The Professor's classification into "Bothers, Blethers, Beggars, and Business" hardly covered its variety. A postcard from Robert Browning in learned discussion of older and later Greek; a lengthy appeal from a pious Jesuit to listen to the burden of scholastic argument and forswear the levities of independent judgment; an inquiry from

some obscure sectarian in America as to the sacramental character of feet-washing; three or four requests for a lecture, an article, a photograph, an autograph; some pages of unsolicited advice from an anonymous correspondent; a roll of illegible MS. from an aspiring playwright; a song dedicated to himself; a cheque for the Celtic Chair; an outburst of affection from a Highlander beyond the seas; and half-a-dozen demands for money,—these form a sample of a morning's delivery to his address. He enjoyed opening and reading his letters, and he enjoyed answering the greater part of them. Only anonymous and impertinent effusions were put in the fire; the others were answered as favourably as possible. He wrote rapidly, far from legibly, but always briefly and with point; and he took his correspondence as part of the day's work, to be discharged at once if possible, and with as much consideration for the writers as their attitude permitted.

The breakfast hour was an interesting time, often a merry one, as envelope after envelope gave up its contents grave and gay, which he communicated to all present with appreciation or wise laughter. Perhaps the letters most valued were those from students, present and past, at home and abroad. He kept nearly all of these, and rejoiced over them when they breathed gratitude and affection for the teacher and friend whom they addressed. How often his charity went forth to those who entreated it, is known only to the friends who witnessed it in constant exercise. Articles written for magazines, the editions of 'Self-Culture,' and other literary work, brought in an annual sum of money which he regarded as pocket-money. It was spent almost entirely in unrecorded gifts to the needy. The writer remembers a winter during which £120 was so acquired and so distributed, and not one of these gifts was blazoned in a subscription-list or

trumpeted to the giver's credit. His name appeared in many a printed list; but the daily help to poor students, to poor literary men, to widows and to orphans, belonged not to the advertisement columns, but to the altar of Him who seeth in secret.

A suggestion made by Professor Hodgson that Wales might prove enthusiastic about the Celtic Chair led to his lecturing at Cardiff and Swansea early in May 1877; but he prefaced his labours with a little tour in the country of Burns and a visit to Whithorn. The walk in Ayrshire refreshed his mind with a glimpse of the shrines sacred to the poet, who was the text chosen for his lectures. From Girvan he drove along the sea-shore to Stranraer, where he spent a night, and went on next day to Whithorn, the earliest mission-station in Scotland, where St Ninian preached two centuries before St Columba's advent.

A pious desire to spend the Sunday in that sacred region led me thither on a Saturday; and the heavens, cold but bright, were favourable. This is a most bleak, bare, and grey old place, on the extreme south nose of Scotland; but to any one who can drag in the past to interpret and to decorate the present, it possesses no common charm, and I spent two happy nights there. Beside the parish church, where I attended forenoon service, the four walls of the old church still stand, overgrown with ivy, and showing on one side an old Saxon door. About two and a half miles farther to the S.E., close by the sea-shore, is the shell of another old church, but less ornate in its style, both belonging to the period when "kings and queens and warriors bold came to crook their proud knees and keep their vows and lavish their gold for the dear grace to kiss St Ninian's bones." The pomp of Whithorn in those times, contrasted with the grey, grave, and bleak aspect of the same site on a Presbyterian Sunday, haunted my imagination and produced a sonnet.

From Portpatrick to Chester to visit Dean Howson, thence to Rhyl to make the acquaintance of Professor

Rhys, and thence to Cardiff, where—his lecture well over—he was introduced to the docks and mighty industries of the place, occupied a week, and on May 6 he reached Swansea. On his way thither he halted

among the bare hills at Dowlais, amid armies of black chimneys spouting voluminous smoke from long, serried ranks of sleepless furnaces, where streams of liquid iron are flowing, like rills feeding a pandemonian Phlegethon. I was led through the fiery scenes of that stupendous city of Vulcan.

On leaving Swansea he went to London, and stayed with Dr George Wyld in Great Cumberland Place. He was at once drawn into the customary vortex, but endured it for not more than a fortnight. His chief concern was to get a publisher for a book whose composition had filled the hours left at leisure after the issue of 'The Language and Literature of the Scottish Highlands.' This was 'The Wise Men of Greece'—a series of dramatic dialogues intended to place before the reader the older philosophers, each at a crucial moment, when the fundamental dogma of his teaching is brought into high relief. The dramatic fragments, although polished in his more recent leisure, were the outcome of years of hard study, and some of them were partially constructed before he shaped and linked them together in intelligent sequence. At first he meant to present only the continuous thought of pre-Socratic minds, but he could not bring himself to exclude Socrates and Plato from his exposition.

He showed the MS. to Mr Macmillan, who undertook its publication; and he dedicated the book to Mr Tom Taylor, as an indication of his esteem for the man, the writer, and the critic.

The Free Church Assembly was busy with dubious work, beginning its persecution of Dr Robertson Smith, and he

had to trust to correspondents for a full account of the pitiful scene. That the eventual result of stupidity, cowardice, shuffling, and rancour should prove to be increase of honour to Dr Robertson Smith, and of enlightenment to all students of the Bible, was not apparent then, and men could hardly look forward to a time when the paltry persecutors of that day would accept, without a twinge of remorse, the larger knowledge of their victim, and attitudinise as progressive.

Why did Luther fling,

chanted the Professor,

His ban against the Pope and his misdeeds,
If private judgment must be caged in creeds,
Each free word gagged, and clipt each upward wing,
And you, with churchly ban and pulpit drum,
Strike Bible readers blind and prophets dumb?

The proofs of 'The Wise Men' began to arrive towards the end of June, and he submitted them to Professor Campbell Shairp for criticism. Professor Shairp wrote that poems on Greek heroes were not of absorbing interest, but that he must admit the claim of the philosophers to universality, and that he had particularly enjoyed the revelation of Trinitarian orthodoxy on the part of Pythagoras!

Miss Isabella Bird was staying with her sister at Tobermory, and the Altnacraig party paid them a visit one long June day. The crofter's cottage which Miss Henrietta Bird had converted into a lady's bower inspired the Professor with the best of all his rhymed tributes to a woman. "The Lay of the Little Lady" deserves to live, as well for the daintiness of its versification as for the truth of its portraiture. It was translated into Gaelic by a Highland friend, and is a folk-song in the island of Mull, where

her beneficent presence was known and loved for many years :—

On the deep sea's brim,
  In beauty quite excelling,
White and tight and trim,
  Stands my lady's dwelling.
Stainless is the door,
  With shiny polish glowing ;
A little plot before,
  With pinks and sweet-peas growing.
. . . . .
Where a widow weeps
  She with her is weeping ;
Where a sorrow sleeps,
  She doth watch it sleeping :
Where the sky is bright,
  With one sole taint of sadness,
Let her heave in sight
  And all is turned to gladness.

Later in the month Miss Isabella Bird was staying at Altnacraig, occupied with plans for her adventurous tour in the Japanese Islands, which she carried out in 1878, and which gave to the Western world its most readable book on that interesting country while the light of other days still lingered on its customs and social life, and before it had fully assimilated the long result of slow centuries in the West, and passed through the extraordinary revolution which a handful of years and impassioned energy have effected.

It was about the end of June that Professor Blackie sent an eloquent letter to the 'Scotsman' on the whole subject of the wrong done to the Highlands by the land and game laws, and by the depopulation consequent upon their exercise. The subject with which he had assailed the public ear for so long was at length reaching that organ, and was eventually to reach the public conscience.

Letters from grateful Highlanders at home and in exile poured in upon him.

Early in July he started for a week's lecturing tour in the North, making his appearance on the Inverness platform as "Saxon Chief" of its Celtic society. He returned to join Dean Howson at Loch Baa, where the weather was wretched, and where he stayed only two days, taking the Dean with him to Altnacraig. A short stay with Dr and Mrs Kennedy, who were summering at Aberfeldy, occupied the last days of August, and September was made especially interesting by a visit to Taymouth towards the heart of the month. These seem to have numbered his wanderings for the season, which was occupied else with correcting proofs, with the study of Atheism expressed in articles for 'Good Words,' and with some modern psalms for the same journal.

His visit to Taymouth from the 17th to the 20th September was made memorable by the warm sympathy which he found there for all his Highland enthusiasms. Lady Breadalbane was as faithful a lover of Gaelic as he was himself, caring infinitely for her Highland home and her Highland people, and she entered into his hopes for the preservation of their language with an equal interest. The Professor lost his luggage on the road to Taymouth, and as it could not be recovered the first night, he had to descend to dinner arrayed in "toggery belonging to the Earl"! But such incidents never tried his composure, and although a stately company, some thirty in number and including Prince Leopold, sat down to table, he thoroughly enjoyed the talk and the *tableaux vivants* afterwards, in which Lady Breadalbane took part as Joan of Arc and as Queen Guinevere. "It is worth travelling a thousand miles to see the Countess alone, so full of vitality, and nature, and dignity, and grace."

His closing weeks at Altnacraig were disquieted by rumours of the approaching railway, which two years later was in full possession of Oban, and which, strengthened by some secondary considerations, ultimately chased Professor and Mrs Blackie away from their home on the "sublime heights."

'The Wise Men of Greece' came out early in November, and letters from Professor Schliemann, Dean Stanley, and Mr Gladstone, who "joined the chorus of acclaim," indicate a percentage of his kindly critics. Dean Stanley's note gives us a clue to a plan maturing in the Professor's mind to cast the slough of toils, literary, academical, and peripatetic, in the new year, and betake himself to the healing waters of the Nile for a period of oblivion and renewal. Before his plans could be carried out he paid a flying visit to London, to arrange with Mr Isbister for the publication of his 'Natural History of Atheism,' which was issued towards the close of 1877, and was reprinted in New York a year later by Messrs Scribner, Armstrong, & Co. His books had now considerable vogue in America, and the same firm had printed his 'Four Phases of Morals,' 'Self-Culture,' and the 'Songs of Religion and of Life.' The Highlanders alone in the States formed an admiring public for the works of the beloved "Apostle of the Celts," and their influence, as well as the exceptional worth of 'Self-Culture,' made him a revered and popular author amongst Americans. He was again and again asked to lecture across the Atlantic, but his hands were always too full on its hither shore to permit him to go; and perhaps his want of personal acquaintance with Americans led him to fear the stress and strain of such a tour, where he had almost everything to learn, and where he foresaw that his reckless rhetoric might lead him into many pitfalls.

The labour connected with the Celtic Chair had begun to

tell a little on his health and a good deal on his endurance, and he had brought the fund to so unexpected a stage of success that he had ample excuse for a respite from a kind of toil which was never congenial to him, although so vigorously and victoriously conducted. He got leave of absence from the University for his trip to Egypt towards the end of January, his friend the Rev. John Keith taking the work of the Greek class during its term. Mrs Blackie, still in failing health, longed for a spring in Italy, and Mrs D. O. Hill, the friend of many years, decided on joining her, while Miss Alice Lewis, Mrs Blackie's niece, went with them as guide and interpreter in a land which had once been her home.

Before the start letters poured in anent the 'Natural History of Atheism.' Mr Froude was again in Edinburgh, busy with "the final revise of the Report" issued by the Inquiry Commission, and interested to find that one of his 'Short Studies' had been translated into Greek. "We regard Greek," he wrote on January 3, 1878, "as a sacred tongue in which only the very best of everything has a right to be expressed. I feel myself converted at once into a classic!"

Introductions came pouring in from various quarters. The Duke of Sutherland sent several to friends in Cairo. "How you will enjoy yourself," he wrote, "and meet Scotchmen when you least expect it!" A young Greek in his class gave him letters to his relatives in Alexandria.

The party left Edinburgh on January 28, spent two nights in London, and reached Paris on the 30th, leaving the same evening for Marseilles, where the Professor took steamer to Alexandria, and the ladies rested before pursuing their way to Rome. His long journey predisposed the voyager for his berth, and he slept fourteen hours at a stretch. The transit lasted from February 1 to 6, a day

longer than usual, for the wind blustered and the steamer rolled. Its tedium was relieved by a few hours at Naples, the only respite from storm. So welcome was Alexandria that he stayed there several days, receiving hospitality from Dr Yule, and from the pleasant Greek family to whom he had been recommended. As a set-off to his discomfort on the sea, and to the storm which raged at Alexandria, he spent his first evening at Dr Yule's in a mood of resentful patriotism, singing Scotch songs. It was an ill-omened arrival in the land of the Pharaohs, and made an impression which he never overcame. Instruction, he admitted, was to be had in Egypt, but not enjoyment. He was too late for the Nile; heat, dust, and baleful winds followed unwonted rain, and produced the lassitude and physical depression with which great heat affected him. But he addressed himself to travel and to tomb and temple inspection, after some study of Strabo in Alexandria. On February 10 he reached Cairo, and was greeted there with rain and wind, which lasted several days, and accompanied him on the 12th, when he went on board Cook's steamer. By the 26th he was at Luxor, and found Mr Campbell of Islay there before him, the sole lord of a roomy *dahabeeah*, in which he entertained the Professor to dinner. Walking towards Thebes about sunset, he encountered a big tortoise on its slow progress, and stopped to enjoy the sight. He rejoined his fellow-travellers, exclaiming, "A well-to-do old gentleman out for his evening walk!" A few days at Luxor, where Dr Appleton was staying, and proved to be the best and kindest of guides, was his most enjoyable experience in Egypt. On the way to Philæ the heat was oppressive. "Once for all," he wrote, "the East does not suit me either physically or morally — only I am glad to have seen it."

He effervesced in sonnets, which relieved his lively sense

of wrong, and rehearsed the everlasting plagues of Egypt. Guides, donkey-boys, Arabs, heat, dust, insects, and the general tendency to take him in tow and shackle his movements inured to freedom, form the burden of twenty-three effusions, happily forgotten. Abu-Simbel compensated for some of the plagues, and the power and repose of the great Rameses' face partially restored his equanimity, but he rejoiced when the downward voyage began and the explorations ceased. Temples and tombs palled upon him, and there were no ladies on board to mitigate their dull reiteration. However, he found his fellow-travellers genial enough for mere males, and came to terms with one of them, who, taking the Nile on his homeward journey from India, was the possessor of a pith helmet, which he exchanged for the Professor's wideawake. This structure was cool and striking, and pleased its new owner on both grounds. He liked distinctive dress, and when he returned to Cairo, purchased an Eastern shawl of many colours, which he wore wound round his waist like an Albanian klepht. A crimson sash was a favourite adornment at home, dating ever since a friend had embroidered one for a bygone birthday, and Oban was used to its presence in his summer equipment. But his appearance in Cairo must have been more impressive.

He stayed there sixteen days, giving up his intended tour in Palestine, and consoling himself with the Boulak Museum. The heat daunted him and sapped his enterprise. On March 29, however, he summoned up courage for the Pyramid of Khufu, and scorned all assistance from Arab guides in the ascent. When he reached the top he conceived a great contempt for the "arithmetical sublimity" of the structure, which seemed to him to border on the ridiculous. He was unable to admire the post-mortem glory of the Pharaohs, being always inclined to appreciate

the past from his own standard of worth in the present. Two other Scotchmen were with him, and the three aired their nationality by singing "Scots wha hae" at the top, asserting that Robbie Burns was a bigger man with a grander fame than Khufu or Kephren. He wrote notes to Sir Alexander Grant, and to his wife and aunt, in fulfilment of farewell promises. That to Mrs Blackie runs:—

Top of the Great Pyramid, 29th March, 11.30 A.M.

Here is a greeting for you from the peak from which sixty centuries look down. Cherish the sacred memory of Cheops.—Your faithful PRO.

Coming down was not so independent a process as going up: he was glad of the help of his three Arabs, whose company he had so resented, and he felt shaky and dislocated when the business was fairly over.

His introductions procured him plenty of pleasant society, as well as an invitation from the Khedive to a ball at Abdeen Palace, held on April 4. Mr Vivian supplied the needful garments from his own wardrobe, and the Professor went under his wing. But he was neither edified nor diverted, and was with some difficulty restrained from giving the Khedive a bit of his mind on extravagance.

On April 11 he wrote:—

This is my penultimate day in the land of mummies, crocodiles, and drifting-sands,—rags, ruins, beggary, and simooms. I go off to-morrow for Alexandria, whence we sail on Saturday, going round by the Levant,—to reach Palermo, I understand, on the 29th.

This voyage refreshed and restored him. Dr Appleton was with him, and the steamer touched at Beyrout, Jaffa, and Smyrna, giving him opportunities for a run to Tarsus and a sight of Ephesus.

On board this most excellent ship I have plenty of fresh air, plenty of leisure, good company, and a constant succession of fine panoramic views of a coast not inferior in various beauty to the lovely

sail from Oban to Gairloch, and much superior, of course, in historic incident. When at Mersina, a harbour in Cilicia, where we shipped incalculable bales of cotton, I took the opportunity of running up to Tarsus, which lies about fifteen miles to the N.E. of the town. The drive lay across the flat plain of Cilicia, very fertile but very treeless, till we came to a bouncing stream and rich gardens of orange and fig trees, with rows of poplars standing up against the sky. The town is small, but has a fair inn, a good proportion of shops, and an aspect of business; but the only remains of antiquity is an old arch—the Western Gate, I presume, of the city, under which St Paul no doubt often walked, thinking unutterable things, when a boy.

I have written five letters to the 'Scotsman' descriptive of our voyage, which you will see in due season.

Palermo was reached on April 30, and he spent the first four days of May in Sicily, seeing Girgenti, Syracuse, Taormina, and Messina. At Girgenti he was mobbed by a crowd of youths, who, from

a quite laudable curiosity, made researches into the character of a strange-looking, white-haired old gentleman, walking on his own legs, with a many-coloured Turkish sash about his loins, and having his head topped with one of Watson & Co.'s Bombay ventilator-caps, of a conical shape, very much like the head-gear of those formidable gentlemen the Prussian soldiers.

Out of the mob two or three bright young students rallied to his assistance, and served as his guide to the lions of the ancient Agrigentum.

Mrs Blackie was at Naples, and on May 5 he joined her there, and the quartette moved north to Rome, Florence, and Venice. There a great trouble overtook them. Miss Lewis fell ill of typhoid fever, and they were detained over six weeks during the hot weeks of June and nearly all July. Mrs Blackie's health was severely strained by anxiety and nursing, and when eventually they were allowed to travel, two invalids instead of one had to endure the fatigue of long railway journeys and night halts. They were compelled to shorten the stages to seven hours daily,

and their route lay by the Brenner Pass to Innsprück, thence to Munich and Bonn. At Bonn the Professor's patience had to be stayed with sonnets. It was thus he waited:—

> Another, and another, and another
> Day on the toilsome road that drags us home.
> O for one quiet careless hour beside
> My own Scotch hearth, or 'mid my green grass dells,
> With breezy pine-trees waving, and the pride
> Of purple heather, foxglove, and bluebells!
> Grant me this, God, and teach my soul to cease
> From thoughts that travel far, and ways that find no peace.

His soul proved unteachable. These constant records of travel, tedious to many a reader, are inseparable from the story of his life. Movement was an essential part of his vitality, an imperious need. Like Ulysses, he "would not rest from travel," and he found it "dull to pause, to make an end." In that he resembled, too, the restless Erasmus, as in so much else of the more erudite Dutchman's character and nimbleness. It is impossible to expunge the notes of his constant itineraries from his biography, as with them would go the very impulses of what he was to his world, and on that ground the writer must crave indulgence for the endless rehearsal of his journeys.

By the last day of July they were at Altnacraig, Mrs Blackie's health undermined and her nervous system shattered. He walked about for an hour in the cool of the eve before entering the house, drinking in the peace of his Highland seclusion.

The affairs of the Celtic Chair Fund now engaged his attention. Mr Beith had transacted them during his absence, and they were highly prosperous. It was necessary to draw up a statement for the Committee, and the books showed that a sum of £11,725 had been collected. It was decided to continue the investment of this money, to make

it up to £12,000 by April 1879, and to leave that sum intact for two years until it sufficed for an endowment of over £500 a-year. The money was invested on landed security. The Professor did not stint his labours until the result aimed at was secured.

Two autumn months passed quickly away, a visit to Loch Baa alone breaking their welcome repose.

I like talking to you better than writing, so get into the boat and come here [wrote the Duke of Sutherland from Dunrobin in September]; we will talk about men and lasses being better than sheep.

But he resisted the tempting summons.

In October he had to return alone to Edinburgh, Mrs Blackie going to Wemyss Bay for change. The College session opened a week earlier than usual. He stayed with his brother-in-law, Major Wyld, in Inverleith Row.

We are getting on very swimmingly here: in the evening we take a rattle at backgammon, and the Major enlarges on his Indian campaigns in an amusing and edifying style. My Celtic Chair Report comes out to-morrow. The classes open on Tuesday. I have written out part of a lecture on "The Study of Modern Languages" for the 'Scotsman.'

This letter is dated October 23. One written two days earlier speaks of a pleasant luncheon-party, where he met Miss Ferrier, daughter of the metaphysician.

With her I entered into various serious conversations about Episcopalian and other Churches. She said she could stand St —— no longer; its monotony and mechanical routine and general ditch-water dulness were too intolerable. She is healthy, cheerful, and very lovable; so I hope you will take her under your wing some summer, as you always know how to cherish good specimens of your own sex.

Mrs Blackie returned in time for the opening session, and his winter's work began. It included a run to London at the end of November to preside at a Celtic gathering there, but he was back in three days. He spent an evening at Westminster Deanery, and gave Dean Stanley his

"Nile Litany," a tirade against the plagues of Egypt, composed at Luxor. Invoking Ra, Osiris, Anubis, and other local powers, he entreats protection against crocodiles, sand, dust, and flies, against *baksheesh*, antico-vendors, donkey-boys, and "all the haggling crew that buzz and fuss with much ado," and he makes a vow to all

The gods in Ramses' stately hall
  At Karnak on the Nile-stream,

. . . . . .

Nevermore with sweaty toil
To frighten frog or crocodile
  Up the yellow Nile-stream;

. . . . . .

Nevermore to stir the stones
For mummy rags or blackened bones
  At Memphis or Abydus;

. . . . . .

Far from Scotia's darling seat,
Nevermore with weary feet
  To dust it up the Nile-stream:
All this, good Osiris,
I swear it by the Nile-stream!

The Dean wrote on Dec. 2:—

MOST WICKED BUT MOST DEAR PROFESSOR,—I have read with much laughter and keenly awakened recollections of the Nile your daring Litany, which, however, as it is but a "bit of paper," I should, had I obeyed your maxim of Saturday night, have thrown into the fire, as interfering, like every other *litera scripta*, with the spontaneous and extempore development of my free prophetic power. Alas! when I think of the anxiety of our dear and most valued Archbishop at Edinburgh, I can hardly write with a light heart.

The opening year, 1879, brought him a gift of memories made precious by death, the Duchess of Argyll and his Nile comrade Dr Appleton passing away in its early weeks. Dr Appleton had returned to London the previous summer apparently well, but the first autumnal damps sent him back to Luxor, and there on February 1 he was buried.

The Professor was casting about for an occupant to the Celtic Chair, and consulting all and sundry upon the qualifications essential. It was difficult to decide whether the new Professor should be a great Celtic philologer of any nationality, or mainly a student of Gaelic, Welsh, and Erse, and of Highland race.

He was in correspondence, too, with the late Dr Birch of the British Museum, who sent him a hieroglyphic rendering of his name, "Chief of the Bards Blackie," in return for the "Litany."

At the "Blackie Brotherhood" banquet held on December 27, his return from Egypt was sung in jocund rhyme by Sheriff Nicolson, the bard of that festive body:—

"Many were his lively jinks
In the country of the Sphinx;
Natives he astonished there,
Copt and Moslem he gar'd stare;
Quick of Arabs he got rid,
Climbing Cheops' Pyramid,
And when on the top he sprung,
'Scots wha hae' with birr he sung
To the land of Bruce and Burns
Very welcome he returns.
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Blackie he is come agen!

. . . . . .

Now with spirits full of glee
Blackie in his place we see;
Scotland when he was away
Seemed more empty than to-day:
Let the times be e'er so sad,
Let the world go e'er so mad,
Pious thanks and cheerful mood
Well become this Brotherhood!
Sing then, ye unworldly men,
Blackie he is come agen;
Tell the news in brugh and glen,
Blackie he is come agen!"

Mrs Blackie's health gave cause for anxiety all winter, and she shrank from the flitting to Altnacraig. As spring drew near, it was decided that she should go first to Dunblane Hydropathic, and then to Moulin, near Pitlochry, to a little cottage there.

This left the Professor free to carry out a project left over from the year before. He had missed Rome then, and wished to make good the defect, and to study there some aspects of the agrarian question in Italy. His mind was much exercised with the lapse into malarial sterility of large tracts of what in ancient days was fruitful farm and garden land. Dr Steele, an old student settled in the Via Condotti, invited him to begin these studies as his guest, and promised him much of immediate interest in the world of archæology and politics.

He started for London on April 21, 1879, "free at last from business, bothers, and blethers." In the train he studied "the mysteries of wages, rent, profit, &c., about three times as much as I could have done in the extremely accessible place called the study in 24 Hill Street."

A peep into the House of Commons and calls on various publishers and editors completed his doings in town, and he left on the 25th for Paris, and thence on the 27th for Turin. Here he stayed long enough to see the city and its memorials of the liberation of Italy, and to climb its neighbouring heights. He was at Genoa by the 30th, and at Pisa next day. There, the hotel company being scant and uninspiring, he devoted his after-dinner solitude to the composition of three sonnets on "The Virgin Mary," "Garibaldi," and "Columbus," trailing some clouds of reminiscence from Turin and Genoa.

On May 3 he reached Rome and his hosts in the Via Condotti. By this time he had cast his winter coat, and he fluttered into the capital in a suit of light tweed, and

a white wideawake of the soft-crowned, wide-brimmed variety, which he preferred. His first impulse, after breakfast next day, was to go to St Peter's. He had not seen the great Cathedral for half a century, but felt familiar with its precincts—as who does not, having once measured its cheerful floor?

He began his reading at once with a book just written by Signor Minghetti, whose acquaintance he had the good fortune to make. The book was a stiff treatise on 'Public Economy,' but he tackled it manfully, not without a sense of strangeness in the Italian terminology. The weather was broken, storm followed storm. "C'è il demonio chi porta la moglie in carozza!" ("It's the devil taking his wife a drive!") said the cook.

On May 10 he called on Minghetti,

with whom I had some interesting talk on the state of public affairs in Rome, and on the economical condition of the *Agro Romano*, which I have been studying zealously here for a week. At first I was quite in the dark, but now begin to see clearly that it is the large properties, along with the devastation of centuries and the curse of a hieratico-aristocratic government, that are chiefly to blame for the damnable offence of turning this paradise of busy men into a favourite hunting-ground of the Plague.

An interesting episode is recorded in his letter of May 13:—

At eleven o'clock yesterday we drove to the palace of Cardinal Howard. The lord of the manor was not there himself, being engaged with the other cardinals holding a consistory for the purpose of creating a batch of new cardinals and other ecclesiastical business. We had to wait in the hall of audience, all hung with flaming cardinal's colour, for an hour at least. Here I amused myself by being introduced or talking to half-a-dozen people, besides half-a-dozen others who recognised me. The room was not large, and so crowded with ring behind ring of worshipping expectants that I had to stand on tiptoe to get a sight of the great pervert when he came in. However, I happened to be in the part of the room where the radius was nearest to him, and I got a distinct impression of his physiognomy,

strong in the upper region, but rather weak below, I suppose from lack of teeth. But if my view of the personal presentation was only by glimpses,—for Newman sat all the while, being too weak to stand, —I had the good luck to hear every word distinctly which he spoke —in English with a clear mellow voice, and in a chaste sequence of sentences in perfect harmony with the fine tone of the sentiments. The substance was exactly what I expected. The doubts and struggles, negatives and threatened anarchies, of modern Liberalism, had thrown him back on the visible unity of God's eternal truth presenting itself to the Western world, and there he found peace and comfort to his soul. It was a moral gain to have heard it from the lips of so good and gracious a man; but a more illogical proceeding cannot well be imagined.

Two pieces of news reached him from Edinburgh, both grievous and regretted—Dr Hodgson's retirement from the Chair of Political Economy, and Professor Kelland's death. Of the latter he wrote:—

I was not surprised to hear of the final dismissal of dear old Kelland from his terrestrial services. He was drooping all winter like a flower with a broken stalk, and it is pleasant to remember with what a bright flash of humour and Christian geniality he departed. I am now the Nestor. . . . I have fallen in love with a man in a book called 'I miei Ricordi,' di Massimo d'Azeglio. It is full of wisdom and manhood and deep glances into the private places of Italian life at the commencement of the present century.

His visit to Dr Steele came to an end about the middle of May, and he chose a lodging far away from the haunts of Englishmen, in the topmost storey of No. 15 Piazza di Monte Vecchio, where he could resume his own untrammelled ways—wandering, studying, noting, selecting, and paying just such visits as pleased himself. He took his morning coffee in the Piazza Navona; made friends with the people—"delightfully simple-minded, friendly, and superlatively polite"; went for long walks on the Campagna and amongst the Alban hills; dined or lunched with the Minghettis or other Roman resident; and scrupulously avoided John Bull abroad.

On May 19 he wrote :—

We are in the full enjoyment of the most delightful summer weather, and I am in the full swing of Roman visits, Roman excursions, and Roman studies, which, alas! must end before they are more than conscious of their commencement. You can picture me in my sublime garret, very serene amid considerable disorder and small discomforts, with an array of books and pamphlets—all Italian—covering the table and waiting to be put into shape by the little busy brain of that wonderful little moth called man.

He records a most interesting conversation with Madame Minghetti on the low status of women in Italy—a matter now slowly mending.

She has been twice married, and after her experience of Neapolitan Marcheses and Princes, who are the merest fribbles of humanity, and yet think it their highest privilege and dominant duty to keep their wives under, so that they may be always a little more ignorant than themselves, she was determined to marry a man who would treat her seriously. Minghetti is the leading thinker and speaker and writer of the Moderate party here, and is destined at no distant period to become Prime Minister of Italy.

He spent his last Roman Sunday afternoon at the Protestant cemetery, stopping at Goethe's *osteria* to meditate; and on May 27 he left for Orvieto, where he spent two days, forgathering with Mr Rathbone from Liverpool, and visiting in his company the Etruscan tombs in the woods above the city.

He reached Florence on the 30th, and busied himself there with agrarian studies, visiting some of the neighbouring farms, with Mr Macdougall for companion and informant. He was so fortunate as to witness the festival of *Lo Statuto* on June 1, and enjoyed its pomp and display. A run to the Lakes, where he met Mr and Mrs Mudie, and shared their carriage from Luino to Lugano, ended his holiday in Italy; and in spite of warning from his fellow-travellers, he crossed the Alps by the Splügen Pass with

post and sledge, and arrived at Coire on the afternoon of June 8.

It was the most wonderful drive that I ever made, and will leave a perfect Pantheon of pictures in my mind. If I had yielded to timorous persuasions and returned by Turin and the Mont Cenis Tunnel, I should have gone through life quite ashamed of myself, like a dog with tail not gallantly swirled up, but shamefully curled beneath its hurdies.

As "Apostle of the Celts" he digressed to St Gallen in search of the famous manuscript in its library, and this adventure is worth quoting:—

To be sure I could not read the old Irish characters, but I was the founder of the Celtic Chair, and to be within two hours' journey of perhaps the oldest Celtic manuscript in the world, and not stir a foot to see it, would have been an unpardonable sin. The result was rather unfortunate. The moment I arrived I sent in my card to the Inspector of the Library, requesting special permission to examine the MS. The Inspector was unwell, but with politeness he requested me to present myself before his bed, where he lay and addressed me in very proper English. There were no difficulties. The old woman, his right hand in such matters, would go in with me and unlock the sacred cases in which these precious relics of old Hibernian learning and piety were preserved. We went: four cases were opened; but I saw at a glance of each that they were all Latin or Greek or old German—certainly nothing that had the slightest look of either a Highlander or a Hibernian. Some mistake! Back to the recumbent old gentleman, who explained that he had understood me to say that I wished to see certain old Latin MSS. written by Irish disciples of St Columba, not MSS. in the old Gaelic language: there was only one such, an Irish Glossary belonging to the Library, and it had been lent out, on special security given, to a student of Celtic in Milan! Well, I had at least done my duty, if not gratified my curiosity; and this also was a consolation, that in Milan, the capital city of the old Celtic Insubres, where Gaelic was spoken several centuries before Latin was known in the world, one individual did exist who occupied himself with the most venerable study of his ancestors. Honour be to his name! Might he not be fished up and invited to be first Professor of Celtic in the University of Edinburgh? Well, another thing also I learned: the walls of the cloister are hung with curious

old pictures representing the life and adventures and miraculous exploits of Gallus and Columbanus, both Irishmen of the sixth or seventh century, who brought Gospel and civilisation into these wild parts.

A glimpse of Constance and one of Frankfort preluded a visit of three days to Professor Pauli in Göttingen, one much enjoyed for its quiet, and for Dr Pauli's delightful singing of student songs. Some allusions to fatigue and to old ailments appear in these letters, and he was glad to get back to Edinburgh on June 18. Here he spent two days with Dr Walter C. Smith, writing on the 19th to Mrs Blackie: "Be greeted, fatherland, home, and wife!" He joined her at Moulin on the 20th, and settled down to the joys of the little Highland retreat, to the refreshment of Ben Vrackie's peak and rolling slopes, and to the usual complement of letters and sonnets for the 'Scotsman,' describing his doings abroad. He climbed Ben Vrackie one July day, and paid his homage in the evening:—

Thou art the queen and sovereign of this land,
Which loves thy shelter and invites thy breeze,
Whose nearer heights thy bluff old guardians stand,
Or climb with green attendance up thy knees.
I praise thy sharp peak neighboured with the stars,
Thy keen pure air of lung-distending rareness,
Thy hoar front battered with long windy wars,
And the wild charm of thy far-stretching bareness.

It is amusing that he was invited about this time to contest the Inverness Burghs as a "Radical Jacobite"! He was at Inverness early in July, making his customary speech on Highland matters at the annual banquet there; but he did not linger in the North, being drawn back by the charm of the Perthshire hills, which held him till the last week of August. Already the tie to Altnacraig was loosened. The railway was making havoc of Oban and its neighbourhood; peace was gone from the road by the

Sound of Kerrera. Miss Isabella Bird wrote to Mrs Blackie: "I fear the Pro.'s delight in Perthshire sounds the death-knell of Altnacraig."

Late in August he set out on a round of visits to Taymouth, to Cluny, to Conan House, and to Skeabost in Skye. While at the last place he went to a school-inspection for the district of Snizort.

About 150 comely young persons of both sexes—generally clean and well-dressed, although one or two were rather ragged and dirty—screamed out with harsh voices some of the well-known English and Scotch songs generally sung in Lowland schools. Not being particularly edified with this exhibition, I asked for a Gaelic song; but, as I expected, could get none: so little do the red-tape gentlemen up-stairs know of the first principles of moral education, one of which is to cultivate the heart by the agency of the mother-tongue and of popular song—the growth of the soil. The spirit immediately moved me to stand up and exhort the master and the scholars to the cultivation of native song; and to nail down my exhortation, and suit the action to the word, I took a pound-note out of my purse, and wrapping a shilling in it, proclaimed a guinea prize for the best Gaelic song to be sung at next examination. Then, of course, three cheers were given for the Pro. The great event was the appearance of the *Ban-bhaird*, or poetess, who came forward and requested leave to sing a Gaelic song of her own composition, which she did with a wonderfully good voice, the subject of the poem being nothing less than a Pindaric celebration of the great Apostle of the Celts, commonly called the Pro.: this was received with oceans of applause, and the poetess concluded by following the Pro.'s example and giving a prize for Gaelic singing,—afterwards exchanging sticks with the Pro., to what effect you will see when I present my very unusual and original staff of travel which I received from the *Ban-bhaird*.

He went home by Oban, where he stayed a few days with Mrs Otter, and by Kingussie, where he picked up another stick, "strong, sturdy, and formidable, which will do to knock the devil down if he should not behave well."

All his letters are full of regret that his wife is not

with him, and that she misses so much that is good and beautiful.

In autumn the most interesting event was Mr Gladstone's visit to Scotland, and Professor Blackie was invited to meet him both at Taymouth and Dalmeny. At the latter place the old friends met, and differed about Homer and much else, and liked each other none the worse. He wound up his wanderings for the year by presiding at the Caledonian Association Festival at Manchester on St Andrew's Day, where the deficit in the fund for the Celtic Chair was more than made up—Bristol, "ten good Celts of Liverpool," Toronto, Hudson's Bay Factorymen, Lord Hartington, and Sheriff Nicolson having helped to complete this success. The fund exceeded £12,000, and his financial labours ended with 1879.

CHAPTER XX.

RETIREMENT FROM THE GREEK CHAIR.

1880–1882.

THE years from 1880 to 1885 are significant for the Professor's public utterances and writings on the Crofter question. His studies in Italy had been made for the express purpose of accustoming his mind to the consideration of all problems involved in the subject of land-tenure, varying as these problems do in the varying customs and conditions of that country. He was thus better fitted to deal with what was becoming a matter of immediate moment.

He began 1880 by lecturing in Glasgow on the Crofters, and "preached a sermon to the lairds with more than usual applause and acceptance." In February he issued a pamphlet on the subject, which treated of the passing of Highland estates into the hands of Southrons indifferent to the peasant population; of eviction and expatriation; of farm added to farm; of clearance for deer-forests and pasture-land. Letters to newspapers and a constant correspondence with proprietors, factors, farmers, crofters followed, and kept the matter well to the front, increasing his store of material for the book which wound up his public action in the cause.

But Greek pronunciation and the restoration of St Giles' Cathedral gave him relief from his more insistent labours. Dean Stanley sent him playful post-cards on both, writing on February 6, 1880, from Westminster :—

> "In accents sweet
> I fain would greet
> The bold restorer of Hellenic laughter.
> All hail Pall Mall,
> And *Max* as well!
> All hail that shall subdue the 'Times' hereafter."

On the 27th of the same month came a stanza on St Giles' :—

> "What shall we say when grim St Giles'
> Is beautiful through all his aisles?
> When now no longer any dread is
> Of 'lugs' beset by Jenny Geddes.
> Instead of Laud, I find to please
> My weary soul good Cameron Lees.
> Instead of Claverhouse's rack, I
> Salute the genial convert Blackie."

The "genial convert" was at Taymouth when this was written, basking in the smiles of great ladies there, and marching up and down the avenue while he meditated o' mornings.

He was due in London to give a lecture at the Royal Institution on the last Friday of April, and left about the 23d to spend a few days with Mr and Mrs Macmillan at Tooting, and to discuss with the former the publication of a revised edition of his old translation of 'Faust.' This recast was not yet completed, but he received hearty encouragement to go on with it. After four days he left Knapdale for Laleham in Clapham Park, where he was much *fêted* by the "wingless angels" to whom he lectured on Greek myths, and in whose albums he wrote wise maxims for their guidance in life. He ended with

a sonnet, afterwards included in 'Messis Vitæ,' and beginning—

> Beautiful Láleham! of most lovely things
> Named with few lovelier, and of things most pure
> With purest;—

which remains an honoured script in the archives of the school.

His lecture at the Royal Institution was on "Gaelic," and it was warmly received. While he was in Clapham Park he gave up some time to reading the story of the "Clapham Sects," and visited the sites sacred to its members. Afterwards he went to stay with Mr and Mrs Archer in their new home in Cromwell Place for a week, interrupted by a visit of two days at Mentmore with Lord and Lady Rosebery, which latter deserves a word of quotation. He wrote thence on May 3:—

> Here I am in the central hall of a wonderful Italian sort of house, or rather palace: all full of pillars and porticoes, and gold and glass, and Venetian velvet and French Gobelins, and clear outlook into the undulant greenery of this soft and luxuriant country. I arrived in time for an eight o'clock dinner; party small and snug, little more than family,—Mr Hayward, the prose translator of 'Faust,' and Mr Dasent, the Norseman, whom all the world knows; conversation full of political anecdotes and English chaff. After dinner the Countess sang "Auld Robin Gray" with great force and taste; another lady was Miss Gladstone, who is a very nice young lady, with all her mother's nature and motherliness breaking out constantly in sweet smiles on her face. I gave her a present of my 'Lays of the Highlands and Islands,' a copy of which I had in my portmanteau, with the simple inscription "To Mary Gladstone." I love her honest face so much. This morning the house has almost wholly swarmed off to the Metropolis, leaving me with the Baby! Sybil, a wonderful production with large blue eyes and serene temper.

Oxford came next, and a supper given by the Scotch students of Balliol, with "plenty of good songs" and applause. "No professor there but Sayce." This redeemed

the inanity of his stay, for he never breathed the academic air as one provided with the academic lungs, and he went off with a glad heart to stay at Birdsall with Lord and Lady Middleton. This visit was an unalloyed refreshment.

The people here are irresistibly nice, the most charming simplicity, grace, and frankness—English culture and Celtic sentiment mingled in the most happy and harmonious way. Besides our hostess, we have Miss Gordon Cumming, as lively as a sunlit waterfall, and flexile in thought and sentiment as a young osier-twig. The Lady is not only a poem herself but a poetess. In her company you feel as if you were in a flower-garden where all the flowers speak.

A lecture in Sheffield closed the campaign, and he returned to Edinburgh about May 16. He and Mrs Blackie were minded to quit the house in Hill Street, and to seek a brighter and fresher home. But he contemplated the change with a pang of regret. Mrs Blackie was at Wemyss Bay with Mrs D. O. Hill, and he wrote to her on May 17:—

Here I am in my old house, my old house, small and shabby though it be; my old house, my old house is just the proper thing for me!

One can imagine how he looked at his book-lined walls, and foreknew the reckless confusion which the transference would make of their perfect orderliness.

He sat to Monsieur Richeton for an etching during these days in Edinburgh, and began to correct the proofs of 'Faust,' submitting them later to Dr Walter C. Smith for revision. Then he went to Altnacraig, but had to return in June for the funeral of his friend and pastor's wife. Another of the inner and beloved circle of friends passed away the same month, the "Little Lady," whose life is still a hallowed memory in Tobermory, Miss Henrietta Bird.

He went back to Altnacraig in time for a visit from Professor (now Sir Archibald) Geikie, greatly enjoyed, as it revived his dormant interest in the advancing science of geology.

During August the writer was a guest at Altnacraig, and has many memories to relate of the visit. Five weeks sped with but three days of rain, and the glory of the West Highlands in that spell of sunshine cannot be forgotten. An Italian visitor, sent by Signor Minghetti, announced one day at lunch that in his forthcoming volume, on the working of the poor law in Great Britain, he meant to recommend the climate of Scotland to his compatriots as more invigorating than that of Italy, and equally sunny. The party listened in a silence compounded of Scottish loyalty and blank surprise.

Early in the month, Mr Patterson of the 'Globe' and Miss Pipe being the other visitors, we went for a three days' excursion to Iona, finding quarters at the Columba Inn, thanks to the kindness of two artists, who generously gave up their bedrooms, and contented themselves with sofas in the parlour. The Professor knew every creek and undulation of the island, and led the explorers, with Adamnan's records and the Duke of Argyll's book for further help, while the red Ross of Mull, the dark-blue sea, and the green banks of the sacred spot filled the scene with sunny colour.

About the last week of August Miss Flora Stevenson, the "Shirra," and Professor Robertson Smith joined the circle and enriched its tranquillity with their presence, their talk, and their songs. Perhaps no week of the summer was more interesting than that, when the afternoons were spent in boating, or on the heathery heights; when the sunsets drew all to the seat on the cliff; when the nights were closed with song or psalm, Sheriff Nicolson delighting

us ever anew with his own Skye songs, surely the most human ever sung :—

"Reared in those dwellings have brave ones been ;
Brave ones are still there.
Forth from their darkness on Sundays I've seen
Coming pure linen,
And like the linen the souls were clean
Of them that wore it

See that thou kindly use them, O man !
To whom God giveth
Stewardship over them, in thy short span,
Not for thy pleasure !
Woe be to them who choose for a clan
Four-footed people !

Blessings be with you both now and aye,
Dear human creatures !
Yours is the love that no gold can buy,
Nor time can wither.
Peace be to thee and thy children, O Skye !
Dearest of islands !"

And the other, and earlier, which ended :—

"Pleasant it is to be here,
With friends in company,
But I would fly to the Isle of Skye
To-morrow if I were free !
Dunedin is queenly and fair—
None feels it more than I—
But in the prime of the summer time,
Give me the Isle of Skye !"

One Sunday evening, when the flush had faded from the sea and the moon was high, the whole party sat on the cliff in the soft and heather-scented air, while the Sheriff led psalm after psalm,—"The heav'ns God's glory do declare;" "The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want;" "One thing I of the Lord desired;" "Now Israel may say, and that truly;" and "All people that on earth do well." Now three of them sing in the courts above—Alexander Nicolson, Dr

Robertson Smith, and the old Professor; but their voices were then already well known in heaven.

When the party broke up in the early days of September, and a remnant of four was left, it fell out one afternoon that Mrs Blackie and the writer, sitting on a garden seat, noted a weary wayfarer with dusty boots open the little gate and climb up the footpath. He wore a soft wide-awake and grey clothes, and displayed no badge of saintship nor lantern of philosophy. "A dominie for Pro.," said Mrs Blackie. The Professor's voice was ringing out from the open window of his turret study, laden with soft Gaelic gutturals. It ceased, and the dominie stood under the porch. A few minutes passed, and Bella came flying to the garden seat. "Please, mum, it's Mr Herbert Spencer in the drawing-room, and the Professor is not to be found." He had closed his book and gone by the back-door to breathe on the "sublime heights" before dinner. Trembling with responsibility, we faced the illustrious visitor, who restored our composure by abusing the Highlands, libelling the innkeepers, and accusing our sex of bribing porters with threepenny-bits, and so compassing every railway disaster ever recorded. With some indignation we flung our gauntlet in the face of the "father of modern philosophy," and it is to be feared that he fled from such unwonted treatment. "This has been a very stormy interview," he said, and took his leave. And just afterwards, returning from his walk, the Professor missed his visit.

He found secret hoards of white heather on the moors, and brought its sprays home for all. One lovely branch he sent that summer to Mr Gladstone, who was ill, and who enjoyed the gift, and the Gaelic motto, "Hard as the heather and strong as the fir," which went with it.

The second edition of 'Faust' was published about the

end of September, and a copy went to the Premier, who wrote from Whitehall on October 9 :—

> Of the spirit and power of the rendering I can entertain no doubt: it moves with the force and flow of an original work. . . . I feel the immense, the overmastering power of Goethe; but with such limited knowledge as I have of his work, I am unable to answer the question whether he has or has not been an evil genius of humanity.

The year 1881 began with an interesting request from Professor Váňa of Prague University, to be allowed to translate 'Self-Culture' into the Tsheque language, that it might be added to the borrowed literature of a country whose native literature the Jesuits boasted to have destroyed.

Lectures on "The Covenanters" and on "The Sabbath" as celebrated in Scotland initiated the year's platform crusade. Both were carefully and seriously prepared, and were intended not merely for the platform, but for a book of 'Lay Sermons,' to be published in the autumn. The latter lecture seems to have been delivered in Glasgow, about the middle of January, on a Sunday evening, and under the auspices of the Sunday Society there. It was the ripe conclusion of a train of thought and argument started in Berlin by Neander more than half a century earlier. Its only weakness lies in the fact that while inveighing against the rigid Sabbath-keeping of Scotland, which led to the exaltation of the letter of the fourth commandment and the perversion of its spirit, he omitted to protect his position by full explanation. No man ever more earnestly kept the Sabbath-day holy, but he kept it fresh and happy also: to him the Sabbath was a delight and honourable, not a day for dull and sour demeanour, and unedifying because unreal observance. He brought his oblation willingly, and indeed joyfully, to the sanctuary. His week-day work was laid aside, and he studied all morning some

passage of St Paul's Epistles, or some character in the history of the chosen people, or some time of struggle for the liberty of pure worship. Always practical and impelled to utter his thoughts, this study grew into lecture or book, and his 'Lay Sermons' are part of such results. In the afternoon he went to church, and the rest of the day he spent in kindly, social intercourse, visiting and receiving friends. But his lecture scarcely indicated to the prejudiced that for him the Sabbath was a hallowed day, and it drew upon him a violent onslaught by the Sabbatarian party, and for a time almost cost him his place in the Highland heart.

Mr Gladstone, writing at the end of the year, says of the 'Lay Sermons':—

Many thanks for your volume. You are most seductive, for on its arrival I have read your Sermon through, of 63 pages, on the Covenanters; and the Appendix, for which I guess that Cameron, Renwick, & Co. would have given you, if they had been on the seat of judgment, a taste of the boot! Me personally you hit hardest when you say (p. 347) that the Homeric deities are "radically elemental gods." I hope that if you are in London after Easter, you will come to breakfast with me in Downing Street at ten on some Thursday, when we will have a pitched battle on this subject; and you may put me in the boot if you beat, or at any rate if you silence me. Notwithstanding this pugnacious note, I am very sensible of your kindness; and I remain, most faithfully yours,

W. E. GLADSTONE.

One of the 'Lay Sermons' was naturally devoted to the burning question of "Landlords and Land Laws," and its text was from Isaiah v. 8, "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth." The others were selected from a number which he had during a long period delivered from time to time in churches and schoolrooms to young men or to mixed congregations.

Some of them were given at Free St John's, others at Mr Matheson's, Mr Webster's, and Dr MacGregor's churches. Only a few of the large number were, however, included in the volume, although many of the rest have appeared in 'Good Words' and other popular journals.

In March Professor Blackie was far from well. The winter had been exceptionally severe, and the strain of regular and early attendance at the College had produced a series of weakening colds. His condition gave some anxiety to his friends, some of whom urged retirement from the Greek Chair upon him. It was decided that a house in Douglas Crescent should be bought; that after the summer Altnacraig should be let, and that country quarters should be of free election as the time for them came round. There is no doubt that these plans were formed with a view to his eventual retirement.

During April he was making inquiries into such Highland details as the dates of tartans and bagpipes, and was also concerned with the census of Gaelic-speaking districts, which, from a flaw in the schedules, was not expected to give correct statistics. He was one of the Edinburgh Committee for the Carlyle Memorial in May, in which month he and Mrs Blackie went to Altnacraig for their last summer there.

In June he made an exploration of Colonsay, "sacred to St Oran and Lord Colonsay," and in September he went to Pitlochry, where his friends the Archers were summering, and thence made his way to Golspie to see the Duke of Sutherland and inspect his mills at Brora. This flight northwards had another object—the study of those remarkable products of rigid religiosity and exceptional power called "The Men," whose habitat is in the northern counties of Scotland, where they wield grim influence, narrowing, depressing, and yet not without dignity and even

sacredness. Dr Aird, of the Free Church manse of Creich, helped him to understand their function of seer and public censor combined.

While Professor and Mrs Blackie lingered that autumn at Altnacraig, the transference from Hill Street to 9 Douglas Crescent was effected under the management of Miss Macdonald,—during those years a trusted friend and companion,—so that on their return they stepped into a house already in partial array. The leave-taking of Altnacraig was celebrated by its own appropriate bard, as the home-coming had been by the "Little Lady." Dr Walter C. Smith, a frequent guest at Altnacraig, sang its *Vale*:—

"Fair within and without,
  Meet for a sage and poet,
With the pine- and birch-clad crags about,
  And the islanded sea below it;
And behind it a ridgey hill,
  While a stream leaps down the glen,
Where the sleepy beat of a little mill
  Low pulses now and then.

Fair without, but within
  Is a rarer, loftier beauty,—
Womanly grace the heart to win,
  And patient doing of duty;
And thoughts serene and high,
  And lore of the ancient days,
And gleams of the light that cannot die,
  And loving homely ways.

Without and within all fair,
  The form alike and the spirit;
He, blithe and gay as the bird in the air;
  She, calm in her modest merit.
Greek lightsomeness in him,
  In her the grave, grand Goth,
But wedding together the ages dim
  By the Christian faith in both.

. . . . . .

Farewell! the sea will beat
  With white foam on thy shore,
And friends will sit on the rose-crowned seat,
  And talk as we did of yore;
But not such talk as we
  Beneath the red pines had,—
And never again would I like to see
  The place where I was so glad."

Soon 9 Douglas Crescent began to wear that look which Mrs Blackie's magic touch gave to all things of her home. The view to the Firth and beyond, the sunsets over Corstorphine Hill, the sense of space and the inflow of light, reconciled her husband to the West End; and two studies sacred to himself, all lined with his books,—and supplemented by the back drawing-room when he wanted change, —completed its triumph over the old house in Hill Street.

He settled down to work with a sense of perfect seclusion, and started the winter's warfare with a stirring letter to the 'Scotsman' of October 26 on "Evictions." He was engaged, too, as he had been all summer, with the material of 'Altavona,' a book which was meant to express all the best experience and conviction which he had collected from his sixteen seasons as a Highlander. The material was in his hands, notes of repeated visits to the islands of the west, where are the memories of clan feuds and clan fealty, of patient missionary settlement and zeal; and notes of constant inspection of every centre of interest on the Celtic mainland, historical, educational, industrial. His occupation was rather with the form which all this garnered reminiscence should take, and he was happy in choosing that of vivacious colloquy between speakers of widely differing types and views, whom he places in the centre of every scene, and associates in every experience. Highlanders, both Catholic and Presbyterian, an Oxonian churchman,

and a German philosopher, and casual, local impersonations, exchange impressions, inquiries, and information on all points intimate to the Highlands; but throughout the variety the author's own personality binds the whole into one. This work occupied a year's leisure, and was published in May 1882 by Mr David Douglas.

On January 10 of the same year a dinner, which served as a kind of consecration banquet, was given to the friends made free of the new home. Dr MacGregor, Dr Walter C. Smith, and other kindly-minded divines, were of the number; and the talk ran on the personal devil, to whom the company denied the material privileges of horns, hoofs, and tail, relegating him to the world of undecorated spirits. An old lady present, whose orthodoxy dated from more dogmatic days, held up her hands in shocked remonstrance. "What!" she said, "would you deprive us of the devil?"

Shortly after this house-warming a series of colds lowered the Professor's health, and premature east winds brought on a temporary ailment of the eyes, sufficiently alarming to confine him to bed in the care of nurses and doctors. This illness lasted all February and part of March. He was practically blind during most of this time, and depended upon visitors, his willing secretaries, for all reading and writing. The daughters of his friend Mr Archer, Miss Macdonald, and the writer took it in turns to minister to these needs, while Mrs Blackie sat by him to nurse and soothe. Dr John Brown still came to see him occasionally, and Dr Bishop supplemented the rarer visits of the "beloved physician." The latter was full of cheer as ever,—cheer for others,—and his calls were the event of the sick-room. The patient brightened up at his voice. "John" and "Hans" they called each other, with the affectionate familiarity of half a century's friendship. "Here I lie,

surrounded by beautiful and delightful nurses, John." "Delightful, certainly, but not beautiful, Hans," till, catching sight of a lady half-hidden in the bow of a window, the doctor made a dexterous *volte-face*, and murmured wilily, "Beautiful indeed!"

All these weeks of suffering were borne with perfect sweetness, and even gaiety. He never complained; he took every dose and bore every lotion prescribed; and he arranged his hours for business, sleep, and social enjoyment with the same precision that characterised him in health. From eight to nine o'clock in the evening he held a little levee, heard the news of the day, and made his comments. His brother professors came to sit with him, and brought the cream of academic gossip. In the mornings from ten to twelve he had his letters read and answered, and listened to some newspaper or book chosen by himself. Then came lunch and sleep, and the afternoons were given to repose and meditation.

Mrs Blackie was convinced that his strength was no longer equal to his College work, but the thought of retirement was distasteful to him. His mental energy was so abounding that he could not credit a permanent failure in its bodily equivalent. But Dr Bishop was assured by the character of this illness that another session of daily strain and exposure would undermine the health preserved in equipoise by temperate habit and by method rather than by inherent vigour. He said nothing at the time, fearing to disturb his patient's convalescence by the pain of such an announcement, and reserved his opinion until the summer.

Amongst the incidents of this time testifying to the hold which Professor Blackie had upon the affections of the working classes, was a letter dated 18th February, from the Committee of the Caledonian Railway Company's

employés, at whose annual entertainment he was wont to preside:—

> We forward to you our heartfelt sympathy for you in your present illness, but hope and trust that a merciful Providence may soon restore you again to health and strength, and that your life may be spared for many years to come in Happiness, Prosperity, and Usefulness. The community at large can badly spare so useful a member of society.

Many other bodies of men shared this sentiment. One day a cabman came up to him. "Will ye shake hands, Professor?" he said; and after the ceremony, "Man, we all love ye." Mrs Blackie called him in fun "the people's John," so constant was the stream of such affectionate homage, and he esteemed it next to the love of his students.

His return to health was celebrated by a meeting of the Hellenic Society towards the end of March. By that time he was able to correct the proofs of 'Altavona,' with alterations in its genealogical matter made by Mr Skene, and in its geology by Professor Geikie. This work took up the leisure of about six weeks, and by the beginning of May he was busy with a lecture on Greek pronunciation and accent for Oxford.

Mrs Blackie was now at Wemyss Bay Hydropathic with Mrs D. O. Hill. He started for London on May 8; had a lively journey, during which he read 100 pages of Howells' 'Foregone Conclusion,' and composed a "May Song." His bourne was Mr Archer's house, but after three days he betook himself to Oxford, where his lecture came off on the 12th, in the great hall of the museum, to an audience of "all sorts and degrees, not without a fair sprinkling of ladies." The Master of Balliol was there, and in an unlucky moment the Professor bethought him of his name as an excellent illustration: "We do not say

Jowétt, but Jówett." This innocent personality cost him the continued presence of the illustrious but sensitive don.

> The people here [he wrote] are difficult to move—even in the best case wearing on their shoulders the head of a god, but having their right arm paralysed, so that their thought fails to leap into action. However, it is always good to speak the truth on the house-tops.

The sad news of Dr John Brown's death came to him on the day of this lecture. "I say nothing," he commented, "but call this the year of warning and of preparation. While we live, let us live like men."

And here a word may be interpolated upon his attitude towards loss by death. It was sometimes said that he did not feel the death of his friends. No more undiscerning criticism was ever ventured. It is true that he put the thought of loss resolutely aside, but it was because of excess, not lack, of feeling. He was unmanned when he gave way to sorrow, and the old melancholy which had undermined the energies of his youth threatened to invade the vigour of his maturity and old age unless resisted with all the might of his philosophy. Once asked why he cared so seldom to return to Aberdeen he replied, "It is a city of dead friends—I dare not go back." And when the comrades of his lifetime died he could not speak of them, but he seemed to grow thinner and frailer for a while until their memory had taken on the radiance of the eternal hope. When the young and promising passed away he grieved with less reserve, for he never quite lost his early bewilderment at the purpose patiently prepared but unfulfilled in mortal development. His sonnet on the death of Frederick Hallard illustrates this :—

> Oh, name him not, nor all the shadowy host
> Of lovely dead, whose memory haunts my soul!
> Be they as bright now as the starry pole,
> For me they are not, and to me is lost

The presence of their beauty evermore!
He was a youth whom to behold was joy,
Dowered with all grace of the fresh-hearted boy,
Pure as white light, and on his face he wore
A wealth of smiles to greet all kindred life.
Erect he grew, and light-plumed, like a flower,
More flushing-fair from fragrant hour to hour.
Till when there came a cruel, cruel knife
And lopped his pride. I turn my face away:
Tears bring no help: I can but work and pray.

From Oxford he returned to London, to be received into its vortex of spring distractions.

I am just returned from breakfasting with *W. E. G.* [he wrote on May 18]. The party was small, select, and various: Lord Houghton just returned from Egypt; Miss Swanwick, translator of Æschylus, second to Blackie!!! Toole the comedian; Mr Knowles, the editor of the 'Nineteenth Century'; and a Mr Roden Noël, a poet. The Minister was bright and eloquent, not at all like a bound man; the conversation animated—on Goethe, Carlyle, German Literature, the Thames Tunnel, Walter Scott, Wedgwood china, &c., &c. On parting, Gladstone made me a present of a Greek biography of himself, on which I caused him to write his name as a memorial.

Mr Toole has given us a delightful comment on this occasion in his 'Reminiscences,' where he tells us that the conversation was on such high matters that he was glad to chum up with a policeman on his way home, to bring himself back to the common key of life.

The Professor enjoyed his fortnight of town to the full, and then went to Painswick near Stroud to stay with Mrs Dobell. Here he wrote on May 26—

I am debating seriously with myself whether I should not stay here till you come south and fetch me back forcibly. I was reading in Nicolson's 'Gaelic Proverbs' to-day that three things will have their own way—a hen, a pig, and a woman!!! When my private letters are published! your character will appear in its true light; and the gross slander to which I am now daily exposed of deserting my poor wife! will appear in all its horrid invention!!

He went to Stratford-on-Avon a few days later, and then to Coventry, whence he returned to Mrs Blackie, now established in summer quarters at Pitlochry.

'Altavona,' dedicated to Sir Kenneth Mackenzie of Gairloch, greeted his return, and its appearance involved him in much correspondence, some of which was controversial, as the matters treated in its lively chapters touched many a sensitive place. But the numberless letters did not prevent him from making his customary appearance at the July banquet in Inverness, where, we are told, he was "very fluent, energetic, and dramatic."

On returning to Pitlochry he received a letter from Dr Bishop, advising him to retire from the Greek Chair. This was written entirely on Dr Bishop's own responsibility, without consulting Mrs Blackie. The letter is dated July 17, 1882, and opens:—

Though I know that you do not approve of my tendering unasked advice, you must kindly allow me to make an exception in your case. I felt more than a year ago that it would be best for you to decide to resign the Chair which you have adorned for so many years. My feeling was deepened by the experiences of last winter, and has been confirmed by your satisfactory progress since the cares of the session have been left behind. You admit yourself quite frankly that you feel the effects of age in your limbs and in various ways. You speak of preparing for the close. Now, so far as fixed public duties and work in crowded rooms, looking over examination papers, &c., I think that you should decide that the end has come. I feel assured that if you do so decide, you will be taking a step better calculated than any other to give you a renewed lease of life, of usefulness, and of rational pleasure. When freed from class burdens your strength will not be overtaxed. If you feel tired, you will rest; if you feel the need of fresh air, you will seek it; if you feel fit for literary work, you will be able to go on with it without compulsion or overstrain, so injurious to one of your age and strength. I should be grieved if you allowed my recommendation to depress or sadden you, and still I should wish to write with sufficient gravity and urgency to lead you to decide in accordance with my suggestion.

This letter must have pained him, and it is characteristic of his alert judgment and essential reasonableness that he accepted its advice without demur, and a few days later sent in his resignation to the University Court. "I was delighted," wrote Dr Bishop to Mrs Blackie, "when his manly reply came, so full of wisdom and promptitude." This business, amongst others, took him to Edinburgh for the last week of July. A new edition of 'Altavona' was already called for; but Mr Douglas desired to pass the book into the hands of a London firm, and Messrs Chapman & Hall undertook the issue. In the Highlands 'Altavona' had an immediate success. A touching recompense for his championship of the poor came from Skye, where the women spun and dyed the wool which was woven into a plaid for his acceptance, reaching him at Pitlochry just before he left for Edinburgh.

He received many a proof of goodwill from his colleagues of the Senatus Academicus. Early in August 1882 his resignation was in the newspapers, and from all parts of the kingdom came letters of sincere regret from his students new and old.

You can look back with thankfulness and gladness [wrote Professor Calderwood] on the work accomplished; may God give you strength for much good work in years to come, and cheer you with the joyous prospect of an eternity for serving Him.

To very many of your old students [wrote one of them] it will be a genuine sorrow to think that you have finally left the Greek classroom, for, to judge from my own experience, it was from that platform that they were first taught to take a free, tolerant, generous view of life. Charles Lowe, the Berlin correspondent of the 'Times,' spent an evening with me last week, and first told me of your retiral. And the greatest pleasure of our meeting was the memories we were able to conjure from hours spent under the gracious influence of your genius and teaching.

It was not till October 23 that a meeting of the Senatus

Academicus confirmed the retirement in the following terms:—

At this their first meeting since the acceptance by her Majesty the Queen of Professor Blackie's resignation, the Senatus Academicus resolve to express to Professor Blackie their regret that he, though one of their oldest Professors, should now be obliged by failing health to retire from the Chair of Greek in this University, which he has held with much distinction for thirty years. During that time, by his numerous and brilliant performances in various branches of literature, and by the part which he has played in the social and public life of Scotland, he has won for himself a wide renown, which has been reflected upon the University. The Senatus must specially call to mind on the present occasion the remarkable feat performed by Professor Blackie in collecting subscriptions through the country, which have amounted to a sum sufficient for a handsome endowment of a Chair of the Celtic Languages and Literature. Perhaps no other man but Professor Blackie could have succeeded in exciting sufficient enthusiasm in the cause to produce such a result. The Senatus record their thanks to Professor Blackie for the service thus rendered to the University, and for the legacy which he has left to them in the shape of the Celtic Chair, of which during his lifetime he will continue to be a patron.

Two-thirds of the endowment of the Greek Chair fell to his portion as retiring pension, and this probably amounted to about one-third of its average income.

Sir Daniel Wilson, who had so strenuously helped him to win the Chair, wrote on August 17:—

Your resignation seems an event in which I may claim a special interest, while it reminds me how time has run since those old days when I little dreamt of wandering away to spend the best years of my life beyond the Atlantic. Let me congratulate you as one who, in laying down his armour, has the right to some honest boasting.

Professor Charteris wrote on September 8:—

I have not only honoured the scholar, but I have appreciated the Christian man, whose influence at the threshold of the student's university life has been so strong and so good. And for all you have done so long to form scholars, who should be men and not pedants, I am one of many to offer you thanks.

The summer ended with two Highland raids, reaching as far north as the Ross-shire lakes and Skye, and including his annual visit to Mull; and he returned to Edinburgh about the middle of October, to begin a final stage of twelve years' unfettered activity.

But first his interest was required not alone for the large question of University Reform, to which he reverted with vigour, but for the local detail of his successor in the Greek Chair. The various candidates were sending in their applications, and some of them naturally sought to engage his influence. There can be little doubt that he would have liked to see his valued friend Dr Donaldson appointed; but when the suffrages declared for Mr Butcher, no man came forward with more cordial welcome of his young and distinguished successor than the old Professor, in spite of his regret that a Scottish scholar had not been chosen.

Another election was of equal interest, that of the first occupant of the Celtic Chair, to which Professor Donald Mackinnon was appointed on December 22, 1882.

CHAPTER XXI.

CLASS-ROOM AND PLATFORM.

1841–1882.

THE foregoing chapters have been written in vain if the reader, personally unacquainted with Professor Blackie, has not by this time realised what manner of man he was. But there are aspects of his public life and conversation to which justice can only be done by giving them the necessary emphasis with a multitude of small touches. An attempt to vivify his portrait in this way may therefore be made in a chapter set apart for the purpose.

Blackie at home and Blackie abroad differed considerably. He was a compound of two individualities both wholesome and good, but not the same in manifestation. At home he was gentle, considerate, methodical, serious; only at table relaxing into discursive talk and occasional explosiveness. His domestic pleasantries were tranquil, and took the form of genial banter and of equally genial irony. To the latter kind belonged the continued narration of the married life and adventures of Mr Bob Melliss. He was a mythical schoolfellow, gifted and amiable. In an evil hour, allured by her rank and pretensions, he had married the Lady Letitia Lambert. This stately personage

belonged to the school of "white-satin-shoe philosophers." Her dainty nerves endured no breath from the plebeian world, but required an environment of patrician and ceremonious elegance. The easy-going Bob had to surrender every friend and every habit of his bachelor days, and became a model husband for this lofty and sensitive dame. He forgot the very meaning of liberty, ate and drank as her stern glance directed, spoke and kept silence at her command. He was not unhappy,—far from it,—but he was a slave, a well-dressed appendage to the Lady Letitia's train. This sorry spectacle was constantly held up for compassion. No wife ever honoured her husband's freedom of action more than did Mrs Blackie, but even she at times begged for small concessions to conventionality, which he granted willingly, but which became inevitably the theme of some new episode in the fabled disfranchisement of Bob Melliss. We knew what was coming when he shook his head and muttered, "Poor Bob Melliss!"

Another home freak was the production at dinner of a four-lined stanza addressed to "Mrs Oke." Its genesis was always reputed to be as follows: "A very curious thing happened to-day, my dear: as I came round the corner, a young man, who seemed to be hanging about the Crescent, rushed up to me in a state of great agitation and thrust a piece of paper into my hand. I asked him what he meant, but he was gone before I could finish." And then he read the lines:—

> Is Okum with you? Oh that stately dame,
> Who walks the earth in such majestic frame;
> Whose glance, like Juno's, casts on all its spell,
> And who in soups and puddings doth excel!

That is one variant of the daily compliment. The agitated young man sometimes thrust a handful of papers upon him, in which case all guests were duly commemorated.

As Professor, as lecturer, and as diner-out, he displayed characteristics which laid him open to the charge of eccentricity. These were the excess of naturalness, of *bonhomie*, of the laughter-loving, jocund, piquant, quick-witted humanity which contact with others excited into ebullition.

In the class-room these humours were often provoked by kindred qualities in the students, and many stories are afloat—taking to themselves a certain Protean contour—of their manifestation. The most celebrated of these may be told in the words of Surgeon-Major Grant Macpherson, a student at the time and eyewitness:—

> On a pillar of the colonnade outside his lecture-room he had pasted up one day a notice to say that he would be "unable to meet his classes" that afternoon. It was not long before the *c* had been scratched out. Shortly afterwards, singing as usual, the Professor came across the quadrangle from the Senate-room, and promptly scored out the *l* also. Then with characteristic gesture, tossing his white hair and Scotch plaid over his shoulder, he walked jauntily away, trolling his favourite song, "Green grow the rashes, O!"

This story first appeared in the 'Strand Magazine,' and Mr Harry How received about a dozen letters afterwards, the writer of each claiming to be the man who scratched out the *c*.

Sharp tussles occurred from time to time between the Professor and some dour Scot who disliked being made conspicuous; but the most sensitive relaxed in the end, under the spell of his sunny masterfulness. A new name in the class gave rise to a sometimes puzzled monologue on its derivation. A certain John Crawford was subjected to an inquisition on the subject of his name, which, yielding little, all the Crawfords in the class—about half-a-dozen—had to stand up, and were bidden produce an essay on the name by the next day. The new student was wag enough to compose the following:—

In bygone and distant days bridges were as scarce as names, so the aboriginal tribes of our country, when under the necessity of crossing rivers and streams, had to mind their feet and keep a look-out for the depths and shallows of the water. But my ancestors soared above such effeminate considerations, and forded the water as the crow flew over it. Therefore, Craw-ford.

This alert audacity delighted the Professor. Students called Bell would be told that no doubt they were so named from the ancestral beauty of the family founder, —a joke cheered to the echo when the immediate Bell chanced to be plain.

We are told by an old student that Professor Blackie would walk into his class-room, lift up his hands, and offer the Lord's Prayer in Greek. Then he would speak his mind in English on some notable event, exacting from the students a repetition or free rendering of the matter in Greek. This would be analysed and corrected and committed to memory. The exercise accumulated a repertory of flexible words and phrases for those who made use of it. Then the reading commenced. All that was noblest in human interest and finest in the larger scholarship was noted with learned commentary and quotations; but he resented losing time over small grammatical pedantries, and over minute accuracies in the rendering of obscure passages. When a difficulty had to be faced, he would pause and go over the passage himself, and would either conquer it or decide that it might be skipped, as the notes respecting it were too verbose.

He leant for help on the few best students, when the others were impenetrably stupid. One of his best men, some time in the seventies, was an Irishman called Geoghegan, a word which the Professor decided should be pronounced *Gawan*. This gentleman came constantly to the assistance of the duller sort, but resented the liberty taken with his name, which he pronounced *Gaigan*. One

day when called upon to read, he kept silence. "Gawan," repeated the Professor without response. "Gaigan, you dour deevil, will you read?" he cried, and Geoghegan leapt to his feet with alacrity. On another occasion Geoghegan decided that he was asked to do too much, and answered that he was "unprepared." The Professor gazed at him reproachfully and said, "O, Geoghegan, I never expected this of you."

A student reading with the book in his left hand was called to order and bidden hold it in the other. He coloured and continued to read as before. The Professor was annoyed, and reprimanded him sharply. The class hissed at this, and the student held up the stump which was all that remained of his right arm. Then Blackie stepped down from his desk, and taking the young fellow in his arms, begged his pardon with tears in his eyes, and turning to the rest, he said, "I am glad that I have gentlemen to teach," and went back to his desk in an outburst of applause. The men loved him, and if the more riotous spirits took advantage of his sympathetic boyishness, and sometimes turned order into rout, even the most ungovernable amongst them acknowledged at heart his patience and tolerance and indomitable pluck and manliness.

Once in winter, when a crowd of students filled the quadrangle and were indulging in a free fight with snowballs, he passed through them with the swinging stride peculiar to him. A snowball struck him as he mounted the steps; he turned at once, flung aside his plaid, and doffed his wideawake. "Fire away!" he cried, but the snowballs fell from the hands of the shamefast lads.

It is true that the talk in class hours was apt to diverge from Greek during the last years of his College duties. His mind, running on Gaelic, on the Celtic Chair, on the

crofters, on Goethe, on John Knox, on the Apostle Paul, would suddenly revolt at the overtrodden track of grammatical precision, and rush for a space with reinvigorating eagerness down some tempting vista. We are told that a student whose head reminded him of Byron was the occasion of an eloquent lecture on the genius, misfortunes, temptations, and mistakes of that great poet; while a mere hint would cause to bubble up and sparkle forth a whole volume of wisdom out of his own experience, and out of the resources which he had stored from Goethe, Aristotle, and St Paul.

But he was really saturated with Greek thought, and fully familiar with Greek standpoints and the Greek spirit. He knew Hellas as well as he knew Scotland, and his aim was to inspire his students with enthusiasm for all that was great in Hellenism, and to imbue their minds with the lessons of its histories, its philosophies, its literature, its examples,—with all that made for reverence, for endurance, for culture, for self-control in its drama and national life,—with what, in short, was worthy of their inheritance from Greek humanity. For he was essentially practical, and taught men how to live. It was from Germany that he had learnt his method. He was a German Professor, in closest touch with the students, as the material from which men were to be matured, and it was to their future worth as men that he mainly looked. He felt himself in this whole-hearted way responsible for the impulse which young minds might at a touch receive, and it can be affirmed that never in his most extravagant moments, when in a manner let loose on the stream of random thought and utterance, did he lose sight of the great seriousness of life, and of its dependence upon God.

He identified himself with the students in a thousand ways, calling on those whom sickness kept from the class;

saving some from ruin by his wise interference; supplementing the work of many by instruction at home; assisting the poorer with books given or lent; watching the development of the more hopeful with solicitude; understanding all except the irredeemably shallow; patiently bearing foolishness, boisterousness, even horseplay, as one who knew that boys must learn to be men through experience of the futility of ignorance and presumption.

He was present whenever it was possible at their gatherings,—often the only Professor there,—and his arrival was the occasion of acclamation. He dedicated books to them, —'Musa Burschicosa' and 'Messis Vitæ'; he supported their magazine, and constantly contributed song, sonnet, or paper to its pages. He secured the co-operation of Sir Herbert Oakeley in the arrangement of Scottish songs to be sung at their concerts; he helped forward the production of a 'Book of Student Songs' for the Scottish Universities, and wrote its introduction. He was one with them, as he had found the professors at Göttingen and Berlin to be; and this beautiful relation outlasted his retirement and characterised him to the end. His reward was great, for the students loved him. No torchlight procession was complete that did not wind up at Blackie's door; and when he appeared at lecture or theatre, he was received as a king might be amongst them, going to his cab at the close between two ranks of cheering youths.

Countless letters testify to the affection of individuals amongst them, to gratitude for salvation, for inspiration, for material help. They cannot be quoted,—they would add volumes to this work. But some from those who, students first and friends afterwards, were acquainted with him both in public and in private, throw sufficient light upon his value as a teacher to be indispensable to this attempt at computation.

A letter from Professor Cowan, Aberdeen University, is full of point with regard to his professorial work in the sessions 1859 to 1862:—

The Professor was both popular among and respected by his students—the few exceptions being those whose sense of humour was defective, or who confounded the efficiency of a professor with that of a schoolmaster. Blackie didn't profess to drill boys, but to guide the studies of young men, and to inspire them with a love of the Greek language and literature. Students who did not care for Greek, and wouldn't work, managed, I daresay, to "get through" his classes without much affliction. Students who *did* like Greek received both stimulus and direction in a high degree; and for not a few who, like myself, entered his junior class without much love of the subject, his brightness awakened interest and his enthusiasm became an inspiration. A notable feature of his junior class was what some of us called his "leading article." He commenced proceedings by "delivering his soul" in English upon some topic of the day—academic, civic, national, social, or religious—and thereafter called up a couple of students to turn the deliverance with his help into Greek. It was an excellent Greek exercise, but it was more; it gave us lads fresh ideas and stimulated our own thought about what was going on in the world. In his class-work he was accustomed rather to read a good deal than to examine passages microscopically, although when a disputed point of importance emerged, he went into the matter thoroughly. When translating Homer, he liked to draw attention to the bard's simple piety. A Greek Professor in his prelections cannot avoid occasionally coming across passages suggestive of things not "of good report." Blackie, whose modesty was genuine, not prudish, hastened over such passages paraphrastically. I shall never forget his words to me after my return from a summer session in Germany. Before he asked me about lectures or anything academical, he said, quite quietly, but seriously and, as I felt, searchingly, "I hope you learned no bad habits when you were away." I have a dim recollection of Blackie's breakfasts. Like most other professorial breakfasts, they were probably a little heavy. No man is himself socially on a cold winter's morning at nine o'clock. But the Blackie suppers, to which I think he invited only those who took some position in the classes, were socially joyous and intellectually stimulating. Toasts, speeches, and songs were the order of the night, and what bulked least was the drinking, not, of course, through any artificial restriction, but

simply because the flow of soul detracted from the flow of negus. Any student who introduced into his speech a graceful classical allusion to "Juno" (Mrs Blackie) met with special appreciation.

Endorsing what Professor Cowan says of his "genuine modesty," some sentences may be quoted from a letter written to Dr Walter C. Smith by Blackie's oldest living friend, Sir Theodore Martin, on March 9, 1895:—

Since 1835 Blackie and I have been friends. I knew him in his early days in Edinburgh as I believe nobody knew him. Though there was a difference of eight years between us, he was to me like an elder brother, and his heart was as open to me as if I had been a woman. It was impossible not to love him—not only for his fiery energy and determination to work out for good whatever power God had given him, but for the truly original purity of his nature. He was in truth the most purely-minded young man I ever met—an Israelite without guile,—and I have no doubt many of the best impulses of my nature are due to his influence upon me in those far-away days. Though we met in later years but rarely, the affection then cemented between us never relaxed, widely though we often differed in our views on social and political questions.

The Rev. Dr Farquharson of Selkirk writes:—

The Professor held a deep place in the affections of his old students, and many of us felt that we owed him much. I entered his class in Aberdeen—a very young student—in session 1846-47. That is only one year short of half a century ago; but while the words and teaching of most of the Professors of that day are but confused sounds to me now, I vividly remember his sayings and manner, and living forceful personality. The intellectual impulse I received from him I regard as one of the most precious portions of my education. I shall ever cherish with gratitude and affection the memory of those early days; and youthful feelings of attachment grew into deep admiration and respect as for a true-souled man, when in maturer years I was brought in contact with him.

A still older friend, Dr Forbes White, supplies an interesting testimony to his work at Aberdeen:—

My first introduction to Professor Blackie took place in the session of 1843-44, at Marischal College, Aberdeen. We entered college in

those days at an early age, and were surprised and delighted by the exuberance of spirit of our new Professor. Except on the recognised days of prize-giving and on the eve of holidays, good order was maintained, though by the influence of love rather than of fear. Jokes came not unfrequently, and witty, wise sayings; yet excellent work was done, though on lines new to us. Looking at a drawing of the Apollo Belvidere or the Discobolus on the walls, he would describe it and its history in free, flowing Latin, and gradually encourage us to stand up in the class and declaim, first more or less on his own lines, and afterwards by giving us another statue to be described in our own words, correcting errors at the close. With what pleasure we heard him in the afternoon hour translating book after book of the 'Æneid,' with philological and historical explanations and references to Milton, Goethe, and Dante! All this, along with the regular class-work, formed a part of his written weekly examination by a method which I believe he was the first to introduce. Thirty questions were dictated verbally, one after the other. A couple of minutes was allowed for the student to write the short reply to each question on a folio sheet. The papers were then exchanged among the students; the Professor gave the correct replies, the number of errors was added up, and the order of merit announced before the close of the meeting. All this showed a systematised method of work with which Blackie is not usually credited. Again, with what unerring skill he discovered the student who was translating honestly, and distinguished him from one relying on a crib; and with what pleasure he detected any vein of poetry in the style of another. Indolence and carelessness he passed by with a word or two more stinging than a severe reproof. Encouragement and the gift of his friendship were the secrets of his power among us. To be invited to his house on the Saturday evenings for private reading in some less known Latin author was the best reward of all. On these occasions he treated us as if we were his sons or younger brothers. After work came the light supper and the feast of intellectual good things —first-fruits of those evenings which in later times he was to make famous in the Hellenic Societies of Aberdeen and Edinburgh. Thus he got to know the tastes and pursuits of different students, and became their wise adviser—pouring out stores from his Italian travel, his studentship at German Universities, and his intercourse with great and good men—a living centre of quickening influence.

Mr Burness, a friend of thirty years' standing, and a well-known member of the Edinburgh Hellenic Society,

sends a spirited contribution, which may fitly conclude these personal reminiscences :—

I have a vivid recollection of the day on which I became acquainted with Professor Blackie. It was a day memorable in the life of every boy—that on which he exchanges the boyish jacket for the manly coat. Like many other country boys, I had left the provincial school with small Latin and less Greek, and come to attend the University. There was then no entrance examination, but each boy went separately into the Professor's private room and was asked to read a verse or two of St John's Gospel in Greek. The result was generally such as to satisfy the good-natured Professor, and it was so in my case. But when the lad happened to come from the wilds of some Highland parish, and was hopelessly at sea, he was sent to a tutorial class for a month or two, after which he was allowed to warstle through. I little dreamt that that short interview was to be the beginning of a lifelong friendship, and that after long years I should mourn for the dead Professor as for one of my dearest friends.

There were then three Greek classes. The first was composed chiefly of boys, but with a sprinkling of men older even than any in the senior classes. These were either altogether self-taught or had been kept back by difficulties of various kinds. The junior was certainly the class in which the Professor was seen to most advantage, and in which the salient features of his character were most conspicuous. He good-naturedly ridiculed his being called on to teach such a class. It was, he said, like employing a 500 horse-power engine to pick up a pin. But then, he added, it was the system he complained of, not the boys. "Oh no, my heart yearns over the boys——" but the remainder was lost in a deafening *thorubos*, and the Professor's eyes were seen to be moist. The fact is, he revelled in his junior class. It was the safety-valve for all his latent fun and animal spirits. Some of the sentences he gave us to turn into Greek still remain in my memory :—

"Now I know for certain that the British spring-time has arrived; for the wind cuts me like a knife, and the frost hangs in icicles from my beard."

"Some believe in ten Homers, I in one. Nature is not so prodigal of her great poets."

His kindness to the young fellows was beyond description. How often he warned us all against overwork and the night-lamp, reminding us that we were only growing lads. Many of the students were strangers in Edinburgh, and, friendless but for him, led lives lonely enough. He invited them in relays to breakfast at his house in

Castle Street, where he and his accomplished wife dispensed a genial hospitality. If any student were ill, he missed him at once, and went to his lodgings to inquire for him. In a thousand ways he endeared himself to them all, and this was the secret of his success. There may be a difference of opinion as to his powers as a teacher, but he certainly kindled the enthusiasm for Greek culture which led his students to teach themselves.

At the end of the session the Professor delivered to his class a valedictory address in rhyme. The only couplet I now remember, and of which the Professor delighted to be reminded, is—

> "But if you wish for Greek to feed the soul, that fiery particle,
> Then come to Blackie's shop and get—the only genuine article."

This was followed by the presentation of the prizes, the winners being described in verse, always highly humorous, if also somewhat personal. On these occasions he generally had some friends with him on the platform. Once, when in the middle of a poetical description of a tall red-headed rustic, he turned suddenly to Dr Guthrie and said, "Do you see him? Yonder he is, like a beacon, on the back form."

Dr Gardiner, in speaking of his qualifications as a teacher of Greek, mentions the fascination exercised on his mind by the study of Comparative Philology, in which "he contrived to awaken an interest by apt illustration. Competitors for the Philological Prize have been known to read the whole range of English books on the subject; and some afterwards devoted themselves to Sanscrit or Celtic, or with the aid of the Greek Travelling Scholarship, which was always said to be the gift of Blackie himself, they pursued the study of Greek Philology at a German university."

Whatever he undertook he did with all his might. The quality of his work cannot be judged from narrow standpoints, whether of pedantry or of sect. Its worth was ethical rather than erudite, human rather than dogmatic. He was a seer and a teacher after the ancient mould, not a prig of either academic or ecclesiastic denomination. A strict Calvinist Celt admitted him into the company of the faithful in graphic terms: "Blackie's

neyther ōrthodōx, haiterodōx, nor ony ither dōx; he's juist himsel'!"

On the platform he exhibited the same perfect independence. He had no confounding second thoughts about his utterances; he never hedged nor retracted, nor guarded himself from consequences. If people misunderstood his gay humours, they might do so. He was healthy to the core, untainted by latter-day fevers which affect the mind with delirious audacity or chill it with apprehensive collapse. If Goethe and Aristotle had taught him the value of mental equipoise, St Paul and our Lord Jesus Christ taught him to work, to pray, to love, to surrender. He wasted no days in dull self-communings, no energy in slothful regrets.

Many stories are current of his eccentricities as a lecturer. They are not exaggerated. His appearance was the promise of a refreshing departure from the unwritten law of the platform. With his manuscript on a table for occasional reference, because he sometimes seemed to forget the very subject of his lecture, he marched to and fro and uttered all that occurred to him. The stream had its source, no doubt, in the opening sentences of his written address, but it took toll of whatever came in its way, and the main current was often overwhelmed by the tributary. No man but Blackie would have been allowed so to defy the conventionalities of public lecturing; but his manner was sincerely natural, and what his audience wanted was the man himself, spontaneous, effusive, and stimulating—not an hour's formal information on a given subject. "Mind Blackie's sense and not his nonsense," he would comment after a succession of verbal fireworks; and even in these the sound sense was apparent. He was not careful to respect the susceptibilities of his hearers—indeed he rather enjoyed a thrust

at local polemics, but it was too kindly to rouse any parry but laughter. Once at Dundee he found the reading-desk adorned with a lovely bouquet of flowers, and curtly commanded, "Take away that bauble."

In the learned Institutions of London and Edinburgh he preserved a more precisian method and kept carefully to his notes, but even there he relieved the tension with outbursts pugnacious and whimsical. Imagination falters when it seeks to depict his appearances in Oxford, and the fine contempt with which the use-and-wont bound dons must have turned aside his lance-thrust, straight and to the point.

In the provinces he might instruct, inveigh, or banter as he pleased. He was the despair of reporters, on whose presence he was apt to comment with scant deference, and who revenged themselves by reporting more of his nonsense than of his sense. Mr Burness remembers his "presiding at a meeting in support of Miss Burton's candidature for the School Board. He had made a very happy, vigorous speech, and resumed his seat, when he suddenly started to his feet again, and said, 'I have only to add that though my language is strong, my opinions are moderate—take that down, you blackguards.'"

He would relieve the tedium of talking with a song, and would break off a serious disquisition on the influence of Goethe, to ask his chairman why he wasn't married. When Madame Annie Grey illustrated his lecture on "Scottish Song," he would kneel down on the platform and kiss her hand as she finished her delightful rendering. Once he introduced her to the audience as the "Show," adding, "I am but the showman." He horrified a meeting of teetotallers at which he presided by beginning his speech as follows:—

I cannot understand why I am asked to be here. I am not a

teetotaller—far from it. If a man asks me to dine with him and does not give me a good glass of wine, I say he is neither a Christian nor a gentleman. Germans drink beer, Englishmen wine, ladies tea, and fools water.

It is true that he soothed the fluttered dovecot by a strenuous appeal for temperance, but he was not again invited to take the lead on its behalf. His very temperance led him to revolt against total abstinence, and his value for the sacredness of a man's word showed him the danger of urging a pledge on those who took it and broke it without remorse.

Perhaps the most amusing instance of his tendency to personality on the platform occurred at Dunfermline. After the restoration of St Giles' Cathedral he was wont to advocate a greater beauty both in the structure and the ceremonial of Scottish churches. On this occasion he was lecturing on Scottish Song, and alluded particularly to the revival of sacred singing and the introduction of the organ into so many of the kirks. This innovation had roused the ire of conservative Presbyterians, who were anxious to retain the stern simplicity of the Reformation, and who looked upon such concessions as Romanising. The minister of Townhill, near Dunfermline, Mr Jacob Primmer, was their mouthpiece, and was deputed to stump the country in defence of bare walls and a precentor. On him the Professor loosed the vials of his invective. "I hear," he said, "you've got a man in this town called Jacob Primmer, who says that worship can't be true unless it is ugly. Let him come to me, and I'll prove him an ass in five minutes." At the close up stepped the Rev. Jacob Primmer and demanded to be proved an ass. The Professor was taken aback for a moment, but recovered with copious quotations from the Psalms, and wound up with a plea for dancing as a religious rite. Mr

Primmer took it in excellent part, and next day the two were seen arm in arm making a round of the sights of Dunfermline.

He has summed up his own misdemeanors in lines addressed to his wife, when she requested him to cultivate a manner void of offence on the platform of the Philosophical Institution. "Pious Resolutions, by a Prospective Lecturer," he called the verses:—

I sober truth and sense will speak,
  Sense from all nonsense free;
With wisdom in a perfect way
  Shall my two lectures be.
I will endure no sportive whim
  Before my mind to play,
No pictured bubble born to burst,
  But sober, grave, and grey!

I will not send a shallow jest
  Light rattling through the hall;
An idle and a foolish song
  I will not sing at all!
I will not flourish my stout stick,
  Nor in my plaid appear,
But sit like judges in the court,
  Sage, solemn, and severe!

I will not touch with rude offence
  A thin-skinned man at all,
But softly shape the thornless thought
  To please both great and small.
I will be polished in my phrase,
  Judicial in my tone,
That all who hear well pleased shall say,
  How wise is Blackie grown!

As a diner-out his alert vivacity and repartee made him welcome. To sit beside Professor Blackie at a public banquet was to be one of the most happily placed at the table, although it involved some hard thumps on the back, and some effort to be equal to the sudden appeals

for the faith within. It also involved liability to public embrace if the responses demanded were to the point and pleasing, but it ensured immunity from boredom. Called upon for a song, and sometimes unrequested, the Professor would give "Jenny Geddes," "Woo'd and married and a'," or "Get up and bar the door," with vigour. In earlier days it was the "Battle of the Nile," or "Hermann the German," and then the voice was sweet and resonant. Towards the end its volume failed, and had to be supplemented with action suited to the verse.

In conversation he liked to startle, and shone as a fighter. Calling on a lady, he said abruptly, "When I walk along Princes Street, I go with a kingly air, my head erect, my chest expanded, my hair flowing, my plaid flying, my stick swinging. Do you know what makes me do that? Well, I'll tell you—just *con-ceit.*"

Mr Seton relates that "at a dinner-party given by the late Sir James Falshaw a verbal contest took place between Blackie and Dr Hodgson, in which some excellent hits were made on both sides—Blackie excited and explosive, while Hodgson was calm and self-controlled. At last the Greek Professor put down his knife and fork with the cry, 'Hodgson, I surrender!'"

Sometimes he would rise and make a tour of the table to reach his antagonist and tackle him more effectually. He took everything in good part, and expected the like treatment from others.

But nowhere was he seen to such advantage as at the meetings of the Hellenic Society, particularly when these took place in his own house. Mr Burness in the following pages gives us a glimpse into the social doings on these occasions:—

Professor Blackie was seen at his very best at the meetings of the Hellenic Society. These were held fortnightly during the winter

months in the houses of members by rotation. It is impossible to give any one who never saw him on these occasions any idea of the versatility of his talent, the brilliance and readiness of his wit, or the exuberance of his animal spirits. I was admitted in 1859, and among the members at that time were Dr Lindsay Alexander, Dr John Brown, Lord Neaves, Robert Herdman, Prof. Gairdner, Dr John Muir, Celt Nicolson, Prof. Bayne, Dr Donaldson, and the Rev. Alexander Webster. We got through a good deal of Greek, but the great feature of the meetings was the *symposium* which followed. As the hour drew nigh, the Professor became conscious, as he said, of a *knisa* (Gr. κνῖσα) which, ascending from the dining-room, gradually became perceptible in the drawing-room, where the readings were held. When the tables were cleared the Professor generally quoted in paraphrase the motto of the 'Noctes Ambrosianæ':—

> "This is a distich by wise old Phocylides,
> An ancient who wrote crabbed Greek in no silly days;
> Meaning, 'Tis right for good wine-bibbing people
> Not to let the jug pace round the board like a cripple,
> But gaily to chat while discussing their tipple.'
> An excellent rule of the hearty old cock 'tis—
> And a very fit motto to put to our Noctes."

Then fixing his eye on the symposiarch, he rose to propose the health of that gentleman, first commanding the removal of any epergne or ornament which obstructed his view. This he did in the historic phrase, "Remove that bauble!" His speeches were simply inimitable; but they were surpassed by his songs. I question whether anything he has said or written will survive "Sam Sumph" or "Jenny Geddes." The only other regular toast permitted was that of the *Despoina*, unless there happened to be a distinguished stranger present, when a similar compliment was paid to him. If the unfortunate man happened to be from Oxford or Cambridge, the honour done him was almost neutralised by the torrent of abuse with which his University was at the same time assailed. Alas! "Where be your gibes now? your gambols? your songs? your flashes of merriment that were wont to set the table in a roar?" The remembrance of Blackie and the Hellenic Society suggests the reminder to Ben Jonson of

> "Those lyric feasts
> Where men such clusters had
> As made them nobly wild, not mad;
> While yet each verse of thine
> Outdid the meat, outdid the frolic wine."

The following is a specimen of how the Professor's health was sometimes drunk at these jovial meetings:—

"To Professor Blackie.

"Blackie! thou art a Scotsman to the core,—
No 'Oxford prig episcopizer,' fed
On cates and comfits and the rosy red
Of alien grape; but one who lovest more
Cauld kail from Aberdeen's grim granite shore,
Haggis and brose of Athole, kebbuck instead
Of gorgonzola; for thy dress a plaid;
For lyre the pipes; for letters Celtic lore.

Thou hear'st not Beethoven; and thy spirit loathes
The idiot song of West-End coteries.
'Oh for some lilt of love and lover's oaths
Sung by some Hebe of the Hebrides,
Or Oban auburn maid trampling the clothes
And standing in her tub, as erst Diogenes.'"

In far corners of the world his name was an inspiration to Scotchmen who had known him. The home papers were ransacked for news of Blackie. An old student recorded in the pages of 'The Liberal' soon after his death:—

It was the writer's fortune once, in the dense Australian bush, hundreds of miles distant from the nearest civilisation, to come across a shingle-splitter who had seen better days, but whom the drink demon had reduced from the status of a scholar to that of a waif and a pariah. As we sat beside his camp-fire watching our "billy" of tea boil, as soon as he knew I hailed from Edinburgh he cried, "Man, how's old Blackie?" In the very bowels of the earth once, when down some five hundred feet in the famous Prince Imperial Gold Mine, on the Thames Field, New Zealand, a humble miner, who nevertheless could write M.A. after his name, accosted me with the query, "I say, mate, were you under good old Blackie in Edinburgh?" Go where you pleased—and I have wandered over a good part of the world's surface—there you would find men who not only had been students under the grand old man, but who loved him and reverenced him even as sons a father.

And men who had not come directly in contact with him had caught the same contagion of love and reverence from what they knew of his life and work. A friend

travelling in South Africa found hospitality at a farmhouse in a lonely spot, far from neighbours and from news. She asked the farmer what requital she could make on her return to Scotland. "Send me Blackie's last book," he said; "nothing could be so welcome." He got it with the author's autograph and a verse of his writing for inscription.

Mr Lees of Boleside, Galashiels, coming back from New York some years ago, found in the steerage, which he used to visit, an engineer who had made a little competence in the West Indies, and was coming home to spend it in making his old mother comfortable. Talking of Edinburgh one day this man asked him, "Div ye ken Blackie?" and when Mr Lees explained that the Professor and he were personal friends, the worthy engineer seized his arm and shook it in his excitement: "Ye ken Blackie! ye ken Blackie! Man, he's juist ma deity!"

One summer day Mr Lees took an old nurse—"of ninety years"—a jaunt up Yarrow on the coach. Blackie was a fellow-passenger, and talked away with friendly readiness to her, and when he left she turned in great excitement to say, "Eh, he's graund! He's a' folks say o' him."

Professor Blackie was no politician so far as party politics go. He was, as he said himself, "not a politician, but a student of politics—interested in public measures and administration only so far as they enabled him to comprehend the principles on which political conduct is based, and out of which social progress proceeds." From the party point of view he felt himself "an altogether exceptional creature in this corner of the world. As a practical man and a good citizen, I only take part in political movements when I see that I can thoroughly understand the debatable ground, and can do some good by giving my vote on the right side."

It is not surprising to find, therefore, that his vote was given sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other. He explains in the "Notes" that "in the main I have been a Liberal, though I voted twice with the Tories, to the great astonishment of partisan politicians. To my nature there is nothing more abhorrent than party feeling; my delight is on all occasions to search out and to acknowledge the good of my antagonist, and to give him my hearty applause when I think he is right." Following this inclination, he once gave one of his two votes in Edinburgh to a Liberal and the other to a Tory, because he liked the men, and saw no reason why both parties should not be represented in Parliament to correct each other! "None the less I was a good sound Liberal: God made me so emphatically."

Only where great public enthusiasm demanded reforms far higher than party motives, could he feel himself at the source of their movement, and in sympathy with their direction. All attempts to enrol him as a partisan were ineffectual, and he retained for himself the liberty of speaking and voting as he pleased. He attacked what seemed to him injustice and wrong-dealing in high places in his own way.

The moment I saw my adversary clearly defined before me, I marched at once into his camp with drawn sword in hand, and gave him my card. This abrupt way of asserting far-reaching principles, and it may be attacking time-hallowed institutions, though it might not have been always *prudent*, as the world loves the word, was, I am convinced, the way in which God meant me to act.

CHAPTER XXII.

RECREATIONS OF AN EMERITUS PROFESSOR.

1882–1887.

THE ten years following his retirement were spent by Professor Blackie in an activity by no means abated, although it was more under his control. He had time for correspondence, for reading, for constant comment in the pages of newspapers and magazines on such questions as had long occupied his thoughts or anew attracted them, for writing books, for lecturing, for visiting,—and all these occupations increased upon his hands. Constantly his voice was uplifted in the old war-cries against Tory and Radical alike, ringing defiantly in the peace-loving groves of Oxford, appealing to the world in the columns of the 'Times.' Perhaps his crusades were for the time depreciated by reiteration, or by his indifference to the quality of the ears to which they were proclaimed. A more elegant propaganda might have propitiated Olympus; but his way was to deliver his message to all comers in season and out of season.

He was busy during the winter after his resignation with compiling his 'Wisdom of Goethe,' published by Messrs Blackwood & Sons early in 1883, and dedicated to his

friend Dr Walter C. Smith. This little book was suggested by his experience of the failures made by many young men for want of a clear understanding of their relations to life, and he desired to bring to their notice the principles of "sound thinking and noble living" which he himself had found in Goethe's reflections. The selections were made to illuminate all the conditions of a man's environment or development, and they were prefaced with an "Estimate of the character of Goethe," partly biographical and partly apologetic.

Immediately after, he was much occupied with meditation and correspondence upon a higher theme, that of the Hegelian conception of the Divine Being, and this led his attention into the various channels of religious doctrine. On that of Calvinism he corresponded with his neighbour Professor Blaikie. No aspect of religious thought was more distasteful to him, in spite of his patriotic pride in the men whose rugged Calvinism strengthened them to heroic defence of their religious liberty. He could not be got to admit that he was a sinner. He protested that he was nothing of the sort. He detested the coarser forms of sin, his charity was known of all men, his sincerity and courage were unassailable, and he rather claimed for virtue such bluntness, inconsiderateness, and self-assertion as constituted his admitted failings. To him they were part of the panoply with which Providence had armed him for the battle of life. It was, however, as a protest against the grovelling confessions of sin peculiar to sectarian Calvinists, which failed to stimulate the sinner to walk uprightly, and were apt to coexist with ways entirely consonant with their admissions, that he emphasised this view of his own exemption. He abhorred, as all sane men must abhor, cant, exaggeration, and censoriousness.

The Professor was at Dalmeny when Lord Rosebery's

second son was christened, on January 22, and at the luncheon afterwards "the champagne was poured out of an enormous beaker, into which three dozen bottles had been emptied, leaving two-thirds of the hollow unfilled! The health of the boy was proposed, and that of the host and hostess." He fired off the appropriate sonnet at the banquet.

In March he was upholding the rights of Skye Crofters in the 'Scotsman,' which attacked him *more suo*, and whose personalities he ignored. The Crofters' Commission was appointed in the spring, and he was keenly interested in its members and plan of inquiry. The chairman, Lord Napier and Ettrick, he esteemed highly; and he was pleased that Sheriff Nicolson, a leal son of Skye, was included in the membership.

Towards the end of May he went to London, staying with his brother-in-law, Dr George Wyld, for a fortnight. A breakfast with Mr Gladstone on May 31, not described in detail, and some Homeric theatricals at Lady Freake's, were his chief social experiences.

In his study of the Land Laws affecting various parts of the kingdom, he had become interested in their development in the Channel Islands, and accepted an invitation to stay in Jersey with his friend the Rev. Dr Nicolson, who wished him to give a lecture at St Héliers on behalf of the organ fund for the Presbyterian Church there. He started for the island on June 8, and spent nearly three weeks exploring and enjoying this new field, delighted with all he learned, and commemorating in his letters the "Flowers, Fruit, and Friendship" for which Jersey is renowned. His lecture came off on June 21. Its subject was "The Highlanders," and he illustrated it with song and recitation. The Governor was present and made a most sympathetic speech, and the proceeds handed to the

organ fund were £14. The famous "kail-runt" was bought a day or two before the lecture. He summed up the sevenfold interests of Jersey as "Potatoes, Cows, Cabbages, Crabs, Oysters, the Norman-French Language, and its Land-tenure," and strung his "Praise of Jersey" into rhyme to be sold for the benefit of the organ. Every morning he studied the history and economy of the island; after lunch he explored; and the evenings were spent in making a crowd of new acquaintances. When he left on June 25, the pier was crowded with friends to bid him farewell. "A whole bevy of handsome young ladies were on the pier waiting to smile sadly and sweetly on the old gentleman as he left their lovely isle."

Perhaps the most interesting excursion which he made during this time was to a little village inland, where his half-brother Gregory had died many years before, and in whose churchyard he had been buried.

On his return to town, he stayed—where he felt most at home—with his friends Mr and Mrs Archer. A host of engagements awaited him, new acquaintances to make, amongst them Sir Edwin Arnold; old friends to visit, amongst them Mr Froude and Mr Browning. On June 30 he lunched with the latter.

He was frank and free and full of talk; altogether an agreeable, rational, intelligent, sound-headed and sound-hearted man; with no poetical or other nonsense about him; a manly, hard-hitting Englishman, as in his most effective work he certainly appears.

A week later the two exchanged photographs.

A visit to Westminster Abbey brought him face to face with his ignorance of the early kings and queens of England, and in the midst of the season's diversions he set himself to read of their lives and vicissitudes. A quotation from his letter of July 6 speaks of a call on 'Tyndall and his lady. We had a fine flow of hock and

a more genial interflow of soul; and I am going back again, so much have we learned to love one another—not at all easy in this big Bustledom." He was weary of London "crushes, vain, uncomfortable, glittering parades."

A dinner at Lord Rosebery's took place on the 10th.

An old lady with tremendous bushy curls of a ruddy tinge was before me, who turned out to be Lady Aylesbury. At dinner, in a room resplendent with silver, I sat beside a laughing, rattling girl from Vienna, dealing in the light, negative badinage that is current amongst idle people in fashionable circles. I told her she ought to study Goethe, and not to delight in nonsense, however clever, and we parted on perfectly good terms, exchanged cards and mottoes; hers, what you might have expected, something to the tune of "Is life worth living?" which, whosoever asks, being of sound liver, ought in my opinion to be shot.

A few days later he returned to Scotland, and spent all August with Mrs Blackie at St Boswells. There he occupied his morning hours with renewed study of the Land Laws, and that from both points of view, as his correspondence with large landed proprietors indicates. Macmillan had accepted an article on Jersey for the October number of his Magazine, and this was part of his summer work. He was anxious to extend his studies to Ireland, and an invitation to visit Professor and Mrs Butcher at Killarney gave him the opportunity of partially doing so on Irish soil. He returned to Edinburgh early in September to prepare for this, and spent a few days at Douglas Crescent, collecting books on the subject, correcting proofs, and amongst other things attending a midnight banquet on the occasion of the opening of the Edinburgh Lyceum.

I supped at 12.30, and returned from the banquet at 4 A.M., very much surprised to find myself toddling home at that hour of the morning, and going to bed when the rest of the world had finished their first sleep. It was very pleasant, Henry Irving altogether natural and agreeable and gentlemanly. The speaking

was short and good, and the songs excellent. Howard, who was in the chair, asked me to propose the health of Miss Ellen Terry; but I, with my usual good sense, devolved the matter on the Dean of Faculty, who knew something about the girl, of whom I knew only a trifle more than nothing. However, I didn't escape altogether, so at 3.30 in the morning I sang "March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale," with great applause. Wyndham the elder was there, looking, as usual, like a well-dressed, well-combed, and well-brushed Eton boy with smooth and bright cheeks.

He recovered from this nocturne in a twelve hours' sleep on board the Dublin boat, and reached his destination on the 12th September. Here he gave himself up to study of the new Land Acts for a week, and then drove to Kenmare to stay with Mr and Mrs Trench, his hosts on a former visit; and from Kenmare he went to Dromore Castle, where he had an opportunity of attending a meeting of the Land Commissioners' Court. All he saw confirmed his earlier impressions, but he found the "oppressors" very kindly hosts. His wanderings took him into Galway, and he did not leave Ireland till the 10th of October.

Several important matters awaited his return. Lord Napier and Ettrick, in a letter dated July 8, had written:—

I hope you will give the Crofters' Commission an opportunity of hearing you on a subject to which you have devoted so much pains and so much love. Perhaps you will attend us in Edinburgh by-and-by. I think of engaging the room at the Parliament House in which the Scotch Privy Council administered the *Question*, if it still exists! I fear it does not, or they may have met in the Tolbooth; but, at any rate, you will be prepared to give an account of the faith that is in you—especially as to the evidence of that consuetudinary right in the soil which you discover in the humble clansmen of the past! I am, at least, one who earnestly desires that the benefits and enjoyments of property should be more widely diffused among our countrymen than has hitherto been the case, believing that there is no greater evil in a State than indigent intelligence.

The Professor's evidence, or rather opinion, was given with much vivacity on October 24.

Another concern was the election of a Lord Rector for the University of Edinburgh. This election was wont to be conducted on political party lines, and the chosen candidates of the two parties were Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr Trevelyan. A few of the students desired to break the record of purely political elections, and requested Professor Blackie to stand as an independent candidate. However admirable their motive, it was regrettable that he acceded to this request, as party spirit amongst the students was too strong to make his success possible, and he was exposed not only to the reckless personalities of such an occasion, but to inevitable defeat, and even to the accusation of having injured the chance of the Liberal candidate. Sir Stafford Northcote was elected, and made, as all know who saw and heard him during the Tercentenary functions of the following spring, a dignified and charming representative of the University.

The year ended with a lecturing tour on the subject of the Crofters and the Land Laws. When he expounded the matter at St Andrews, the Professors prudently abstained from attendance! The year 1884 was devoted, like its predecessors, to the same question, and this study culminated towards its close in the publication of his book entitled 'The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws,' and dedicated to Mr John Bright.

His lecturing crusade began in January at Manchester, where he preached "the gospel of just and fair laws," demanding, "Is Mammon or Jehovah henceforth to be supremely worshipped in this land?"

From Manchester he went to Birkenhead, to stay with

his nephew, and to speak at the annual meeting of Mrs Birt's "Sheltering Home for Destitute Children."

To go into the streets of such a place as Liverpool [he ended], look upon the castaway weeds of humanity, pluck them up, nurse them, put them into greenhouses, that is a reverence which only those can practise who live in the most purified atmosphere of the highest Christianity.

The months of early spring passed in writing his forthcoming book, and in corresponding with members of Parliament, with landlords and others, on the two subjects of Education in the Highlands and the Land Laws.

On the 16th, 17th, and 18th of April 1884 he was engaged with all the Edinburgh world in receiving and entertaining the University's guests from all parts of Europe. Professor Donner from Helsingfors stayed with him during that memorable celebration of the Tercentenary, whose lions were Robert Browning, Virchow, Pasteur, and Count Aurelio Saffi.

The Professor liked his guest cordially, and circulated for him 100 copies of his pamphlet on 'Scottish Families in Finland and Sweden.' Another friend made and entertained was M. Emile Laveleye, the Belgian statesman, who died recently. The Professor contributed to the imposing service in St Giles', which inaugurated the celebration, his own beautiful Hymn of Praise.

Towards the middle of May he was busy reading the Report issued by the chairman of the Crofters' Commission, with hearty appreciation of the evidence collected, and some demur at its apologetic tone otherwise. On May 24 he went to London to stay with Mr and Mrs Archer. His first object was to secure a publisher for 'The Scottish Highlanders,' in which he had some difficulty; but eventually Messrs Chapman & Hall, who had

brought out a third edition of 'Altavona,' undertook to be its sponsors.

For three weeks of his stay in town he avoided society, and refreshed his mind by reading the history of Whitehall, the Temple, and the Tower, making frequent visits to each, and getting their significance well fixed in his memory, as he had done that of Westminster Abbey the year before. A touch of apprehension dictated this mood. He wrote on May 29:—

> I am making very few calls, as I am determined for some time to be master of my movements and do some effective work while I am here, and surrounded by grand and gracious influences. God knows how soon I may be cramped and cradled into imbecility.

He made two new acquaintances in the early part of June, both of whom interested him greatly. One was Mr Frederic Harrison, and the other Mr R. F. Horton of Lyndhurst Road, Hampstead. The latter he learned to know while spending a few days with his sister, Mrs Kennedy, in Hampstead. On June 8 he went to Lyndhurst Road Church, "and heard the young prophet Horton, a prophet indeed! learning and force and polish and poetry and sense combined; the finest thing I have yet set my eyes on in London; a man worth going a thousand miles to hear." After the service he went to see the preacher in the vestry, and somewhat startled him by kissing him, German fashion, on both cheeks. The acquaintance ripened into hearty mutual regard, and was renewed from year to year.

A meeting of the Celtic Society, where he spoke on the Land Laws; a boating expedition with Mr and Mrs Holman Hunt; a visit to Mr Hunt's studio to see the "Triumph of the Innocents"; a lecture by George MacDonald on "Wordsworth," when the Professor preached a counteracting gospel according to Goethe; a reception and break-

fast at the Premier's, and many other interesting matters, occupied his time after the middle of June.

On the 28th he heard the debate in Parliament on the Crofters' Commissioners' Report, and was by no means satisfied with its tone. On the 30th he spoke at a great meeting in the city organised to draw attention to the matter; and early in July he quitted the season's distractions for Scotland, and joined Mrs Blackie at Peebles. Here he took to the History of the Borders, and to walks no longer so extended as formerly; and on August 9 he went by train to Oban, there to join Mr M'Farlane and his family on board the Santa Maria, and to spend a delightful fortnight amongst the islands and lochs in a kind of private crofter inquiry cruise. He spoke at meetings, prepared or improvised, at Portree, Stornoway, and elsewhere; visited the place where the fences were pulled down on August 13; indulged in much sympathetic "sedition," and bade his host adieu on the 25th with real regret.

He was in Edinburgh for a few days, but returned to the North on September 2 for a round of meetings and visits, amongst the latter to Dunrobin, Conan House, and Glen Tana. He profited by these to gain information from the proprietor's as well as from the crofter's point of view. His book was now well forward, and on his return to Edinburgh the manuscript was despatched to Messrs Chapman & Hall.

The most interesting incident of October was his election as a member of the Executive Committee for establishing a British School of Archæology in Athens. In November Mr Horton was in Edinburgh lecturing at the Philosophical Institution, and dined with Professor and Mrs Blackie. The concluding weeks of 1884 were employed in lecturing tours, first in Scotland, and then at Manchester, Leeds,

and Birmingham,—on Burns, on the Land Laws, and on "Beauty in Nature and Art." What leisure he had was occupied in correcting proofs, and in writing on the philosophy of language.

At the end of the year he received the first copies of 'The Scottish Highlanders and the Land Laws,' and despatched the dedication volume to Mr John Bright about Christmas. Mr Bright wrote after its perusal:—

> The whole story of the past and present of the crofter class is not a little one of a melancholy character, and their future is not easily perceived. Land which is not fertile and a climate most uncertain offer little promise of prosperity or of ordinary comfort to the people, and any possible changes in the law will, I fear, not bring about the improvement which you and I so much wish for. Whether any real good is done or not, you have laid the case before the country in a book of much interest. I have to thank you for the kind words in which you have connected my name with your labours on behalf of your suffering people.

Letters poured in from readers of the book who were on either side of the Crofter question. All agreed in acknowledging the vigour with which it was written, the range of study which formed its foundation. An interesting feature of the book is the *Testimonia Sapientum*, which follows the Preface, and which records the convictions of the wise of all ages, from Job and Aristotle to St Paul, Shakespeare, Laveleye, and Sismondi, on the tyranny of land monopolists. The book is divided into three parts — the Scottish Highlanders, the Land Laws, and the Crofters' Commission. Its treatment of each is forcible and instructive. Perhaps the whole loses interest from a certain discursiveness, which had become a mental habit, due to overmuch lecturing; but it remains a valuable contribution to informative literature on the subjects with which it deals.

Early in 1885 Altnacraig was let for a lease of five

years, subsequently extended, which relieved Professor and Mrs Blackie from expense and anxiety regarding their West Highland home. The first quarter of the new year was devoted to activities become normal—lectures, speeches as chairman of meetings, usually those of working men, and articles for magazines. It is impossible to overtake them all, and their record would be but dull reiteration—not that they were dull, but that they resembled each other, and followed in each other's wake.

From the first of May to the middle of June he was in and about London as usual, returning to Edinburgh by Oxford and Liverpool. This holiday was more given up to personal enjoyment than even formerly, and it is needless to repeat the tale of its visits and banquets. The most interesting of the former was a stay with Lord Lytton at Knebworth, which he described in a letter dated June 10:—

I never was in such a grand house or slept in such a grand bed. The bedroom was wonderful for a poor Scotch professor—all panelled and carved, and studded with various armorial bearings and rare old portraits, including Edmund Spenser. The room was called Hampden's room, from some old tradition of his lodging here. Somehow the Earl has a great notion of the Pro., saying that I had taught him long ago the proper method of studying Greek, and that my translation of Æschylus is the only one that contains real poetry. Perhaps this is true, and, at all events, is very agreeable to Oldie. In the drawing-room, by particular request, I sang the "Quaker's Wife" and the "Bonnie House o' Airlie," and this morning I wrote a poem in the guest-book.

"Oldie" was a domestic rendering of the old Adam. In Oxford he stayed with Mr and Mrs Ritchie, and was made much of.

The summer was spent in various places—Yarrow, Peebles, Dumfriesshire—and in autumn he was back in Douglas Crescent, preparing lectures, contributing to Mr Reid's 'Why I am a Liberal,' and writing in the 'Scots-

man' on a burning subject, the Disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. His attitude towards this question is constantly misrepresented. He had no sympathy with the Disestablishment party. Their reasons did not seem to him to be of importance, and he deemed the Church of Scotland associated in the national life with the preservation of the national liberties. Had there been in that Church the menace to Protestantism which has appeared in the Anglican system, no one would have more stoutly demanded its destruction as an organisation. He admitted that the Church of God has nothing to do with externals, and that even were the Scottish Church deprived of its loaves and fishes, it would survive, a spiritual body. But it displeased him that there should be an outcry against an institution which presented a noble front to the world of workers for the truth.

In November he lectured at Kelso on Goethe to an enthusiastic audience, going thence to Airdrie on a like errand. When he returned to Edinburgh, it was to resume a study of the lessons taught by history concerning the connection between Church and State, on which he lectured twice in December to the members of the Philosophical Institution. These lectures were published by Messrs Macmillan in England, and by Messrs Scribner in America, in the form of a small volume entitled 'What does History Teach?'

Impartial history [he sums up] offers no countenance to the notion that Established Churches, when well flanked by dissent, and in an age when the spiritual ruler has ceased to make the arm of the State the tool of intolerance, are contrary either to piety or policy. Christianity, of course, stands in no need of an Established Church; religion existed three hundred years in the Church without any State connection, and may exist again; but Christianity does above all things abhor the stirring up of strife betwixt Church and Church from motives of jealousy, envy, or greed.

Perhaps the "impartial history" is too profoundly com-

plicated to be mastered in a study of some four months' duration.

He turned from the subject with relief to the preparation of notes on "Scottish Song," on "Jacobite Songs," and on "Robert Burns," and spent three weeks of January 1886 in an English lecturing tour—at Leicester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Walsall, Kendal, Carlisle, and Newcastle—from which he returned triumphantly on January 28. In February he lectured in Edinburgh on "Scottish Song." It was about this time that he made the acquaintance of our delightful Scottish singer Madame Annie Grey, and a hearty friendship ensued between the two staunch patriots. It was Professor Blackie's influence which strengthened Madame Annie Grey's devotion to Scottish song, and led her to sacrifice all openings in other directions. It became a habit for both to co-operate several times a year—the Professor as lecturer and Madame Grey as illustrator—in expounding to Scottish audiences the infinite range and charm of their native music.

A correspondence with Mr Ruskin on kingship, virginal womanhood, household womanhood, and good workmanship, made the early months of this year interesting. The Professor sent him his little book on Church and State, acknowledged as "wise and helpful."

An event which gave him great pleasure was the appointment of his valued friend and old student, Dr Donaldson, to be Principal of the University of St Andrews. He was busy, too, with an enthusiastic review of Sir Theodore Martin's translation of 'Faust' for the 'Nineteenth Century,' as well as with a correspondence concerning Greek accents as illustrated by ancient writers on music, with Professor Munro, who agreed with him that the accents had been put to indicate a certain amount of emphasis, although he doubted whether it was given with more force

than in French, endorsing his opinion with the testimony that accentual poetry is common in modern but not in ancient Greek.

During this winter the Professor had shown some hospitality to two Greek students from Smyrna, Constantine and Elias Simitopoulos, with the pleasant consequences of a warm acknowledgment from their family, accompanied by gifts of honey, sweetmeats, and little antique figures. In Greece, and wherever modern Greeks resided, his name was become a household word. Many years had elapsed since his first efforts to reinstate modern Greek in its true heredity had been welcomed in Athens, and all his utterances on the subject were eagerly published and perused there, so that during the last score of his years he received constant acknowledgments from Greeks of their gratitude and veneration, and these were amongst the most valued of the tributes showered upon him.

Towards the end of May he went to London to stay with the Archers. He had selected from the overflow of his songs and sonnets a certain number for publication. These he called 'Messis Vitæ; or, Gleanings of Song from a Happy Life,' because they included the expression of his cheerful and reverent wisdom, as well as allusion to the many persons who had made life interesting to him, and the Scottish "traditions, shrines, and melodies," to the celebration of which he was increasingly devoted. He dedicated the volume "To the Students of the Scottish Universities," because "there is not a little in it that owed its inspiration to the contagion of fresh young minds, and to the leisure for cultivating the Muse afforded me by the usage of what, in Scotland at least, I cannot but regard as the happiest of all human avocations, the profession of an Academical teacher." Messrs Macmillan accepted the book, and it was published in October.

His publisher secured, he set himself to drain the cup of London enjoyment, as he liked it, mixed with pleasure and profit in due proportion. He was present in the House of Commons on that eventful 7th of June when Mr Gladstone's Irish Bill was rejected, and made the acquaintance of many members, whom he sought to interest in his new war-cry of "Home Rule for Scotland." It is characteristic that as the pleasant dream of restoring a Parliament in Edinburgh more and more bedazzled his patriotic imagination, he deserted the Irish cause and became a notable Unionist.

The Colonial and Indian Exhibition was a feature of that season, and interested him far more than the preceding displays. He visited it some twelve times. He saw 'Faust' from the gallery of the Lyceum, but found its presentment of the great story distorted. He made a study of the National Gallery with his usual energy. Amongst social doings, a luncheon-party with Lord Rosebery best merits allusion. He described it in a letter written on June 7:—

We had a very pleasant party at Lansdowne House last Saturday. A little circular parlour with a dome above, and a little round table in the middle with a few chosen guests, numbering eight in all, including mine host and hostess; Lord and Lady Aberdeen; Ferguson of Novar, a square-browed Scot with a bright open face; Drummond, the scientific religionist of the hour, tall and handsome; Villiers of the Foreign Office, and Calcraft of the Board of Trade.

Three weeks of town proved enough, and he got home in time to snatch a glimpse of Oliver Wendell Holmes, who was that summer in Scotland.

Mrs Blackie and he made Moffat their summer quarters, and this set him once more on the track of the Covenanters, his gleanings from local sites and traditions being utilised in a lecture on "Scottish Nationality" delivered

in August to a Moffat audience. This, a special lecture devoted to Peden the Prophet, and the series on Scottish songs, served for three autumn campaigns—two of them in England, one in Forfarshire. He found local singers in most places, who helped to illustrate his musical discourses: on one occasion that year, when he was lecturing at Renton on the Jacobites, the chairman proved equal to "Cam' ye by Athole" and "The wee German Lairdie."

An interesting guest was with him towards the end of the year, Prince Krapotkin, staying during the fortnight necessary for his appearances at the Philosophical Institution. His host was absent in Yorkshire for part of this time, being much lionised, from which fate he was glad to get home to such familiar occupations as the frequent letter to the 'Scotsman,' when an old subject budded and broke into a new blossom of thought. Thus he was denouncing the study of Latin and Greek in December, and asserting the sufficiency of any modern language both as mental exercise and as equipment for life. He certainly underrated the importance of the classics to literary style, as many a scholar proceeded to intimate by letter.

The year 1887 began with a lecture on "Burns" in Edinburgh, and with the intimation from a Rabbi in New York that his beautiful psalm—

> "Angels holy,
> High and lowly,"

had been included in the Jewish Hymnal there. February was made interesting by a visit from Professor Rhys, and by a prolonged correspondence with the Bishop of St Andrews on the Christian Hierarchy, a matter on which the Professor and the Prelate were by no means of one mind. Lectures and lay sermons occupied March and April, and by the end of May he was in London, his

solitary journey having been tempered by the singing of Scottish songs a great part of the way. He had new acquaintances to see—amongst them Dr A. C. Mackenzie, who set some of his ballads to music, and Miss Agnes Smith, the well-known Hellenist and traveller. Mrs Blackie was at Harrogate with a friend. His stay in town was bisected by a visit to Professor Rhys in Oxford. The first part was devoted to Loftie's 'History of London,' with verifying rambles; and the second included, amongst other festivities, a view of the Jubilee procession from the windows of the Baroness Burdett Coutts's house, when he was recognised by the crowd and cheered. A dinner at the Mansion House and a garden-party at Dollis Hill belong to the second part of his season in London. Of the latter Mr Gladstone wrote on June 19:—

The constant influx of visitors prevented me from having a moment with you yesterday, except to congratulate you on your perpetual youth. I write to perform a duty and secure a pleasure. I have read your volume of poems ['Messis Vitæ'], or the greater part of it, with wonder at its elasticity and freshness, and admiration of its healthy and joyous tone, as well as memory power. There are two or three iconoclastic lines on p. 126 which I am wicked enough to wish to cut out of the good company in which they stand.

The passage alluded to occurs in the sonnet called "Christ and Christendom," a noble repulse of modern show and sham, of ritualism too *versus* pure worship,—a protest in advance of what is becoming the test of true religion, "What would He say?"

Of the year 1887 there is little more to record. The summer was happily spent in the manse of Selkirk, and already he was reading up the life of Burns for his contribution to the "Great Writers" series, published in February of the following year.

CHAPTER XXIII.

"LIVING GREEK."

1888–1891.

CONCERNING the 'Life of Burns,' Dr Stodart Walker, the Professor's nephew, writes:—

> I asked him once why he wrote this book. "Well," he said, "I was asked to do it, and at first I refused, for I can never do work to order. But then I thought a little, and I said to myself, There are two kinds of persons who may write that life. First, the blind hero-worshipper, who will write a useless blatant kind of work; and then another much worse person, who will play the righteous uncharitable moralist with Burns, and probably look at him through his own myopic lenses. I felt that I understood Burns, and that righteousness and mercy could guide my course."

How he succeeded can best be understood by reading the book. It has been accounted "a tender and yet masterly review of the greatest lyric poet of his native land." He neither suppresses nor extenuates the wrong done by Burns, but he teaches us to understand the man's temperament,—with its glow of genius, its self-respect, its temptations, its deep remorse, its unassailable dignity in presence of his dull accusers.

The author lectured on the subject of Burns in Kilmarnock at the time of its publication, and records how he was

treated with great hospitality of a teetotal character, out of keeping with the place and the occasion.

Like Mr Gladstone, he was during his closing years the recipient of many gifts—amongst them, of the "Liberal umbrella" from Mr Joseph Wright; and he figured in a clever advertisement of the "Drooko umbrella," which gave the ministering public of cab and 'bus drivers a handy nickname for him. His leisure was occupied with an article for the March 'Forum,'—on "Scottish Nationality," —fiercely patriotic, as was his wont on that subject. Letters were coming from old friends about his 'Life of Burns'—from Sir Daniel Wilson at Toronto, with pathetic retrospect of the changes and losses of five-and-thirty years; from Sir Theodore Martin in London, and from Mr Gladstone. "Burns," wrote the last, "a phenomenal man, whose genius all must own, while some lift it to an extraordinary height, and whose chequered life constitutes in itself a chapter of human nature."

Early in 1888 he was making inquiries of his friend Mr George Seton with regard to the first appearance of the Scottish Thistle in history and the settlement of the Gordons at Kenmure. A protracted "talking pilgrimage" occupied half of April, and its shrines were Arbroath, Seaton-Auchmithie, Forfar, Montrose, Aberdeen, Dundee, and St Andrews. Its most interesting record is of the little fishing-village of Auchmithie. His lecture at Arbroath contributed £30 towards the erection of a recreation-room for the unspeakably poor and neglected fisher-folk, a building which Mrs Gilruth with patient and persistent effort secured at a cost of £200. "We spent yesterday forenoon in a very instructive but not altogether pleasant way, visiting the over-worked and over-burdened generation of fisher-folk here,—so oppressively sad that the æsthetical enjoyment of the picturesque crag scenery is utterly marred

by the spectacle." His visit cheered the brave lady, who had no sooner opened her recreation-room than she set about collecting £1000 to qualify Auchmithie for a grant of £3000, wherewith to construct a decent harbour, and that in the very teeth of the local dignitaries. "In knowledge, love, and joy," she wrote to Mrs Blackie, "he excels all the people I ever met."

At Aberdeen he stayed with friends much beloved, Dr and Mrs Forbes White; and he made a round amongst the old associations, visiting his mother's grave in the churchyard, and looking up Dr John Forbes, the companion of his Göttingen student days, now an octogenarian. When he returned to Edinburgh, it was to celebrate a Hellenic meeting, of which a note from Dr Flint indicates the subject:—

While you are in the embraces of white-armed Andromache, or gazing with admiration on the work of Hephaistos, I shall be—not poring over dusty books, but — painfully writing certificates. I shall have neither Greek nor song, and will not even enjoy my supper. You will enjoy all three. Too happy mortal!

Mrs Blackie went to Wemyss Bay on May 1 with Mrs D. O. Hill, and he was at home alone winding up his various concerns before the annual visit to London. Amongst these was a collection for a scholarship, which he considered to be of great importance,—to give to the successful student of theology six months' residence in Athens which would make his acquired academic Greek alive by practice in the modern and living language. He wished to make perpetual what he himself had given as a prize during his professoriate. On May 5 he wrote in reference to this:—

My pious begging is now finished, and I am troubled with my besetting sin of self-righteousness. I find nothing to condemn in my procedure, but a great deal to praise. I have by graceful per-

sistency hooked and landed three magnificent fish—the Lord President of the Court of Session, Sir W. Turner, and Principal Sir W. Muir. I have been as busy as a waiter at a junction station when the train waits twenty minutes for dinner.

Two days later he was in London with Dr Wyld and his family. A visitor in the house was Miss Warrack, who had been a member of his Greek class for ladies some years earlier. That class yielded some passable scholars for result, and the best of them were admitted to the Hellenic Society, adding, if not to its erudition, at least greatly to its social interest.

One of his first labours in town was to write in letter-form a sort of manifesto on the Scottish Universities Reform, the Executive Commission for which was being constituted. This spoke his mind on a matter which he had agitated for forty years, and it was printed and distributed to all concerned. He wrote on May 14:—

The letter arrived after breakfast, and so at 12 P.M. I set out for Westminster, and marching straight to the Scottish Office, Whitehall, I had a pleasant interview with Mr Cochran Patrick and Mr Dunbar, both hands to the Marquis of Lothian, who was not in. Then I had a most delightful lunch with Samuel Smith, the wise man of Liverpool, whom you know; and then I came back and wrote to Gladstone, Chamberlain, Lord Aberdeen, and Goschen, with a copy of the Manifesto.

The most interesting letter of his faithful diary for May is dated the 18th:—

Here events follow in swift sequence. On Wednesday at 2 P.M. I had a very warm friendly time with Browning, who loves me as a brother; I wish his manner was as easy and natural in his books as at his luncheon-table. Present there were only his sister and a Miss Keep, studious of Browning and of Greek, from Northampton. In the evening at 8.30 I found myself in Lord Rosebery's new house with a grand array, or rather a snug select committee, of Gladstonian Liberals, including the G. O. M. himself and his lady; also Lord Aberdeen and his lady; Principal Donaldson, Arnold Morley

the Liberal Whip, and a few others. The G. O. M. looked quite well, but discoursed rather too seriously about various matters, Popery and French novels, both unlovely subjects; to which unreasonable seriousness I put a pleasant end in the drawing-room by giving "The Bonnie House o' Airlie," at the express request of Mrs Gladstone and mine host. Yesterday, by appointment, I rattled up to South Hampstead, and found Mary Anderson in all her innocent brightness in a fine old house and garden looking cheerfully down on the far smoke of London. She was not alone, but had a small circle of musical, literary, and artistic people about her, with whom I found it easy to interflow. We had the most wonderful thunder-roll of piano force from a Polish girl named Natalie Janotha. In the evening, after an early dinner, Grace and I set out for the Princess' Theatre to witness a new play by Hall Caine and Wilson Barrett, who sent us stall tickets,—a romantic drama, full of love and self-sacrifice, and tragic catastrophe.

Mr Hall Caine remembers him "weeping like a little child" at this first performance of "Ben-ma-chree."

He interrupted the stream of gaieties by a visit to Cambridge, where he stayed with Mrs Lewis, seeing both Newnham and Girton, and making the round of colleges and chapels with patient diligence. He presented Miss Helen Gladstone with the four volumes of his 'Homer' for the Newnham Library. Then he returned to London to the social round, attending, too, a meeting of the Scottish Home Rule Association, and forming one of a deputation to Mr Joseph Chamberlain, which that gentleman omitted to receive.

About the middle of June he rejoined his wife, and together they went to Kingussie to spend July and August. The beautiful Spey valley, with its guardian Bens and cradled lochs, was a new field for his inspection. He recorded at this time that he had faithfully kept his vow to see some fresh bit of Scotland every year, and that now half-a-dozen islands of the west and the counties of Forfar and Kincardine alone remained incompletely explored. At Kingussie he did his best to top the

neighbouring heights and to search out the spots sacred to "Charlie and his men" on foot; but the old elasticity was lacking, and climbing was a painful effort. The weather too was bad, July cold and rainy, and August only partially fine. Still he managed to stand on the crest of Cairngorm, of which he wrote in his "Praise of Kingussie":—

> Thither mount with me, and standing
> Where the dun-plumed eagle floats,
> In God's face who heaved the mountains,
> Bid farewell to petty thoughts!—
>
> Bid farewell to party squabbles,
> Shallow jest, and bitter word;
> Breathe a breath that knows no slander,
> And from free lungs praise the Lord!

A better experience was theirs in September, when they stayed with friends who rented the farmhouse of Laggan above Dulnain Bridge, a house set on a hill and overlooking the valley, where the Spey winds in majestic folds, and beyond which rise the blue mountains in full display. Then the weather was at its finest, and the Professor had pine-woods on either side, where he could walk and meditate. He was gathering together all he knew of Scottish song, seeking into its various sources, and combining what he learnt into a volume, which was published at the end of the year by Messrs Blackwood & Sons, with the title 'Scottish Song: its Wealth, Wisdom, and Social Significance.' It was dedicated to Dr A. C. Mackenzie, who thus wrote in accepting the compliment:—

> I appreciate to the full the honour in being associated with one whose life has been devoted to his country's literature and music. I am eager and anxious that Scotland should take her place among the musical nations, and within the last few years I have been led to believe that this hope will be realised.

The new year brought him one of the prostrating colds which so often laid siege to his vigour during the six remaining years, accompanied by a return of weakness in the eyes, and by a depression of spirit to which he gave utterance in the verses "Willing to Depart," printed later in 'Life and Work':—

What make I here with wandering wit,
  Thoughts bound by rope of sand,
And fancy-fed unpurposed will,
  Blind eye and groping hand?

And memory like a man who sleeps,
  And waking strives in vain
To fix the motley march of shapes
  That floated through his brain;

And legs of withe and arms of straw,
  For manful work unfit,
Where like an old cat by the fire,
  I sit and sit and sit.

O God, O God!—nay, but I will
  Bear bravely to the end;
Some good comes mingled with the ill
  In all that He doth send!

Into this shadow came rays of light, in the shape of letters appreciative of his 'Scottish Song.'

You never forget me [wrote Sir Theodore Martin]. Your new book came to me as a very "sweet remembrancer" of the days of Lang Syne. I have got more than half through the volume, which sets me singing in imagination all the old songs it chronicles, which in former days I used to delight in singing. The heart with you has lost none of its youth under the experience of a long life.

A visit from Mr Minto helped his convalescence; and a delightful letter from Dr Donner at Helsingfors gave him the gratifying news that 'Self-Culture,' "the wonderful little book," had been translated into Finnish, and was well known amongst the Finns.

When he was better and busy again, Mrs Blackie went to Birkenhead for change and rest. He dined with the neighbours in the "street of saints and sages," as he called Douglas Crescent, and rendered account of his daily doings. Of January 31 he wrote :—

I dined quietly at home, and at 7.40 proceeded on foot to 5 Wemyss Place, where we had a crowded Hellenic, with no fewer than eight maiden faces and not one clerical! The meeting was very jolly; Gairdner sang a Blackie song, and C. Robertson showed fruits of an accurate scholarship that would have satisfied the most dainty-toothed Oxonian.

Early in February 1889 he was afield on a "talking tramp," its stages Newcastle, Sunderland, Huddersfield, Birmingham, and Carlisle, the subjects being "Goethe" and "Beauty in Nature and Art."

Mrs Blackie joined him at Carlisle on the homeward journey, and we find him busy all March and April lecturing in Scotland—on one occasion to a large audience in the Grassmarket of Edinburgh—and corresponding with the Bishop of St Andrews on that recurring problem of the "three orders," and with the Scotch gardener at Rydal Hall on the substitution of the term *British* for *English* in political and general discourse.

By May 1 he was ready for his six weeks' junketing in the south. On the way to London he read a considerable part of 'Romola.'

It is a wonderful book; such large reading, such picturing, and such a graceful touch: only I fear I shall never learn to love novels, as there are thousands of things which I see pass before me in the living drama of life which I do not care to reproduce or to see reproduced, however skilfully. I deal with books as with pictures; the cleverest picture shall have no place on my walls unless the subject be beautiful and the sentiment ennobling.

When he had finished the book he amended his comment.

It is a masterpiece. For historical learning, vivid picturing, eye for character, fine thoughtful feeling, graceful style, and elevating moral, I doubt if it has its superior in the English language.

This verdict, however, lacks one thing, and that the all-important interest in the story.

He was with Mrs Edward Wyld for a fortnight. His friends Mr and Mrs Archer had been in India for two years, but were on their way home. Scottish Home Rule meetings and conferences claimed part of his time, and he made an effective raid on May 15 "on all the publishers from Covent Garden to the Row." He scintillated intermittently in the realm of rank, but on the whole contented himself with untitled humanity, whether kith and kin, or poets, artists, and authors. He was aggrieved about his personal appearance. Mrs Blackie had surreptitiously shent his snowy locks, and he lodged his indictment against her as follows:—

A man was he, not made of vulgar stuff
Honest and stout and true, but somewhat rough;
And who a stiff, ungracious crest upreared
Against fair hands that kindly interfered;
And so his wife with silent footsteps crept
One day behind the old dog as he slept,
And shore these snow-white locks with cunning shears
Whose loss she now bedews with pious tears.

On May 23 he went to Oxford to pay Principal Fairbairn a visit, and to inspect with great interest the beautiful College reared by dissent and "lifting its head proudly among the oldest academic halls." He wrote on the 26th:—

Yesterday I went out with mine host to his lecture-room in the town, and heard a most excellent discourse on Herder, Jacobi, Fichte, and all most familiar post-Kantian expositors of wisdom. Fairbairn is a man for thoroughness of culture and largeness of view, I fancy, not inferior to the most accomplished of the pedagogic dons here and superior to most.

He met many of the local notables, and renewed his acquaintance with Professors Rhys and Sayce. Dining at Jesus College, he met Professor Freeman the historian, Mr Murray the lexicographer, and Mr Bryce.

On his return to London he had occasion to rejoice over a cheque from the editor of the 'Forum,' handsomely remunerating his paper on "Scottish Nationality." He sent a letter to the 'Times' on Subscriptions, called forth by the proceedings of the General Assembly in Scotland, and by its effort to alter into more liberal shape the acceptance of the Westminster Confession. This appeared duly, and met with hearty response.

He left the "magnificent London turmoil" about June 12, and, after three days at Bristol with Dr Nicolson, returned to Edinburgh.

The three summer months were passed at Kirkstead, St Mary's Loch; but in spite of his interest in its associations and scenery, it is doubtful whether he ever found his way into that hidden heart of Yarrow which opens only to a few, and these the intimates of solitude. He missed the human element, and rejoiced when the coaches brought their load of casual trippers. He appreciated the Selkirk festival on the third Friday of July, when "the lads and lasses" came to St Mary's Loch to spend the hours in dancing. The day was direful, rain falling in torrents, except for a mid-day respite, when they danced with all their might on the green at Tibbie Shiel's. "But it did not last half an hour, and they were all forced, like a routed host, to retreat into the small house, within which they swarmed and buzzed after a fearful manner. Some attempts at racing and wrestling took place in the face of the rain, and at intervals I perked about and entered into wise and humorous conversation with the more notable of the pleasure-hunting throng."

On the Sunday after, he was present at the open-air service in St Mary's churchyard, overhanging the loch, when Mr Borland preached on the righteousness of God's kingdom, to a crowd of worshippers who had come from far farms and towns,—from Selkirk and Moffat, from Bowerhope and Dryhope and Douglas Burn. The sight set him rhyming, and a long array of stanzas commemorated the day in the 'People's Friend.' He rhymed, indeed, all summer, making mention of what he saw and heard. Perhaps the best of these verses appeared in 'Blackwood's Magazine' for December that year, ending—

I praise the green huge-shouldered hills,
  The silver-shimmering waters,
The hill-fed well whose draught brings health
  To Yarrow's sons and daughters.

And I for love-lorn maids can spare
  A tear of kindred sorrow,—
But my best thought is glorious John
  At Tibbie Shiel's in Yarrow.

While at Kirkstead he received from Mr Drummond, jeweller at Stirling, a scarf pin in gold, modelled like the "Wallace sword," its pommel made of a pearl from the river Forth, in recognition of his "spirit of national patriotism."

He had been concocting for three years past the rhymed stories and eulogium of the heroes—Jewish, Classic, and Christian—of the old world; apostolic, kingly, and patriotic of the middle ages; and revolutionary, naval, and military of more modern days,—and the proofs were already corrected and about to appear in volume form, when he returned to Douglas Crescent. A week later, the news of his sister's death summoned him to London. Mrs Ross had spent the last years of her life close to Hampstead Heath, in active and useful membership of

Mr Horton's church, and she passed away on October 8, 1889. The Professor went to Courtfield Road, attended the funeral, and made a halt of three days at Oxford, on his way home, to see the inauguration of Mansfield College, as Professor Sayce's guest. On October 15, 1889,

at 11.30, in the great Hall of the new Mansfield College, more than 1000 people came together to hear the opening discourse by Principal Fairbairn. It was, as I expected, masterly; solid and interesting in historical matter, elevated in tone, graceful in expression. After the discourse, more than 500 people were entertained at a grand luncheon, at which not only a host of English, Scotch, and foreign D.D.'s, D.C.L.'s, and what not, were present, but Jowett and a great array of the aristocracy of Old Oxford.

This breaking down the walls of academic exclusion incited his ready muse, and a note from Dr Fairbairn, dated October 30, acknowledged her inspirations:—

The lines are both fit and beautiful. We are bringing out a memorial volume, and shall place them there, one of the most welcome mementoes of the historical event. We all thank you for so kindly remembering us.

A "talking tour" in Perthshire wound up the year, and in December 'A Song of Heroes' was published by Messrs Blackwood & Sons. Perhaps the most valued tribute to its vigour was that from Mr Froude, who read it every word at a single sitting. "I congratulate you with all my heart," he wrote, "and I congratulate Scotland too. The Scotch strings will still sound the right music if rightly touched."

The years 1890 and 1891 were devoted to a continuous attack on the pedantries and anomalies of the teaching of Greek in England. His arguments were strengthened by a closer acquaintance with the modern literature of Greece, to which he now devoted much of his leisure, collecting the works of his old friend Professor Rangabè, of Bikelas, Satha, Phranzes, Polylas, Koraes, and others.

Some of these volumes were sent to him by Greeks; others he bought. He found in them the same tendency to purify the literary language of Greece from its foreign and debasing elements which he had noticed in 1853 in the language spoken by educated Athenians. He found it incontestably proved that modern Greek so purified reverts naturally to the ancient form; and his opinion, dating from the year 1829, when he read Greek in Rome with a young Athenian, and corroborated by every comparison which he made, received constant endorsement in the course of his reading. Even in Oxford such men as Professor Freeman—a righteous free-lance like himself—supported his views.

> I wish [the historian had written two years earlier] I could call Oxford the home of any language. It—or at least a majority in it—will have nothing to do with English or any other Teutonic tongue; it jeers at Celtic and Slavonic; it suspends Arabic; it teaches Greek you know how, the Greek of two or three arbitrarily chosen ages, sounded in a hideous fashion, which no Greek of any age could understand. Their ignorance is not that negative darkness which consists in the mere absence of light. It is something positive, Egyptian darkness that may be felt. It is an aggressive contempt for all wider learning.

One result of this reading was the delivery of two addresses to the members of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, one on March 3, 1890, on the "Living Greek Language," ending with a scheme for reforming the teaching of Greek as a living language; and the other on March 5, on "Adamantios Koraes" and his labours, early in the century, to eject from the written Greek of his time the Turkish, Albanian, and Italian elements which debased it.

To make his conviction of the close relationship between modern Greek so reformed and the language of Homer and Æschylus productive, he proposed that all teaching of

Greek should be assisted by the reading of current Greek newspapers and literature, and that a native Greek should superintend conversational classes, as well as teach the modern history of his country. And finally, he reiterated his appeal to all "patriotic patrons of learning," that they should assist hopeful scholars to reside for at least six months in Athens, and, by attendance at the University classes and use of the current dialect, acquire a living familiarity with Greek, and so restore the scholarship of Scotland. This last proposal was very near to his heart, and he made it practicable by his own assistance and labours in collecting the sum needed for the year, providing for its continuance eventually out of his own resources. His suggestions were warmly encouraged by such men as Professors Rhys and Sayce, and by other members of what may be called the scientific school of philologers, as opposed to the academic or grammarian school; and as the former are preparing the way for future students of language rather than the latter, it may be hoped that Professor Blackie's rank as a pioneer will hereafter be understood and acknowledged.

Connected with his work in this field were an address, which, with a silver cup, the members of the Hellenic Society presented to him on March 15, recording their sense of his great services; and a paper written for the 'Scottish Review' of July, on the visit of Bikelas to Scotland, on which the learned Greek had lectured in Athens. Professor Blackie's review of this lecture was acknowledged by Bikelas as valuable for its appreciation of his address, and for its expression of opinion on the subject of modern Greek.

Some of his lay-sermons were gathered together early in this year, and published by Mr Douglas as 'Essays on Subjects of Moral and Social Interest.' The chapters

were five in number, the two best being that on Scottish Nationality and that on the Philosophy of Education. The most valuable part of the book, however, is contained in the Appendix, in which he recapitulates his views upon the rational teaching of languages, in a dozen characteristic pages. The volume is dedicated to Lord Rosebery, "Statesman, Patriot, and Thinker."

The Professor's freakish humour found a butt that March in the weathercock of the Dean Free Church at the east end of Douglas Crescent. He wrote on the 19th to the Rev. Archibald Bell, the junior pastor of the church :—

My dear Sir,—Your weathercock is the most persistently steadfast character in Edinburgh. Blow the wind as it may, your bird always points to the west. I am willing to subscribe a shilling to any one who will go up and teach the creature to attend to its duty. Steadiness is a great virtue, but pliability has also its place in the temple of the Aretai.

And a few weeks later, in response to a witty vindication of the weathercock's preference for the west wind from Mr Bell, he gave the bird a voice and utterance in the lines :—

Ye weathercocks, ye are a shifty brood,
  Who greet with servile front each wind that blows;
I now disown your slippery brotherhood,
  And look one way with steadfast-pointing nose.
Sunday or Saturday, I invite the west,
  In this dry season of all winds the best.

He was not ready for the south till May 9, and his stay there lasted only a month. Its most vivid records belong to Oxford and Cambridge, where he spent a fortnight. He stayed with Professor and Mrs Rhys at Oxford, and lectured on the 15th at the Taylor Institution.

The Pro. mounted the platform and marched bravely into the front of ancient prejudice with the cry, Linguistic Reform, Nature, and Life, instead of dead grammar and dry rules! There was a good audience, but few dons: Murray, the great philologer, sitting

with mild dignity in the front bench under the nose of the lecturer; Fairbairn also, and Gardner, Professor of Archæology. After the lecture, which lasted an hour, we proceeded to Jesus College, where the Welsh do congregate, and sat down to a large dinner-party of eighteen. On Saturday the most agreeable incident was having the celebrated Herkomer, the artist, to lunch with us. He is a tall, dark man, more like a grand Italian captain of brigands than a German; and indeed he assures us that, as a South Bavarian, his blood is from Rome, just as in Dacia, and his name signifies Herkomer, the stranger, the man that comes hither from a foreign country. I had the good fortune to find Murray in his *scriptorium*, a word borrowed from the monkish establishments of the middle ages, which had a special chamber for the copying of old MSS. My friend's *scriptorium* is a sort of tent with solid roofing, where his philological reports from local contributors are piled up in learned order on the shelves, while a body of working clerks, some nine or ten, sit with pen in hand below at the table sifting the papers and arranging the results in alphabetical order.

The Cambridge visit was to Mr and Mrs Lewis, with whom he corresponded in Greek. On May 23 his hosts held a drawing-room meeting, at which he expounded his views on "living Greek" to a select gathering of dons and philologers, amongst them Sir T. Wade, Sir G. Stokes, and Professor Skeat. His suggestions were received with far greater cordiality than at the sister University.

After a fortnight of the London season, with some talking on Goethe for the Goethe Society thrown in, he was glad to escape to Crieff in Perthshire, where a cottage was already tenanted by Mrs Blackie for the summer. Pleasant neighbours—amongst whom was Miss Gordon Cumming—and old Jacobite houses made the months interesting; but late in August he fled first to Mull and then to Strathspey, where he spent a glorious fortnight, singing Scotch songs with Madame Annie Grey, a fellow-guest at Laggan. A visit, too, was paid to Mr M'Pherson at Kingussie, a friend well versed in Highland lore, who helped him with his topographical researches up the Spey.

An article on the "Christianity of the Future" appeared in the September 'Forum.' His mornings in London had been occupied with its composition, reviewing the many retrograde "isms" pretending to be Christianity, but false to the great forward movement preached and purposed by our Lord.

Three fruits of his preoccupation with modern Greek matured in 1891—his 'Greek Primer,' colloquial and constructive; his effort to bring about the Greek Travelling Scholarship; and a plan to revisit Greece, although this last was in its very realisation made futile by illness.

Early in the year he was much interested in the 'Times' correspondence on compulsory Greek and the teaching of Greek, and contributed to the correspondence, which filled columns of that journal from many authoritative quarters. But his chief labour was the excellent little 'Greek Primer,' published by Messrs Macmillan, and forming a grammatical supplement to his 'Dialogues in Greek and English,' printed for his students a score of years before. This Primer was based upon the opinions which underlay the earlier work, and which his growing intimacy with modern Greek had quickened into principles. In the Preface we recognise these, freshened and fortified by his immediate study; and although he asked the assistance of academic Grecians in revising the proofs, it is characteristic that he acknowledges their proffered corrections without using them. The book once out of his hands, he left it to his publishers, and set about collecting introductions for his visits to Constantinople and Athens. The farther destination was suggested by an excursion voyage undertaken in the April of that year by the R.M. steamer Chimborazo, which made the tour of the Mediterranean, touching at many historical points, and eventually finding its way to Stamboul in time for the great festival. He secured a sheaf of ex-

cellent credentials, set about reading Greek journals of the day, left on March 30, 1891, for London, and embarked on April 1. He found in the steamer a goodly company of fellow-passengers, with many of whom he made terms of comradeship. The Bay of Biscay was not in genial mood, and for a few days he half regretted his octogenarian enterprise; but no storm occurred, and when it was once headed into the Mediterranean, the steamer became a pleasant home. He attached himself particularly to Mr and Miss Cochrane from Galashiels, the lady winning his heart by her sympathetic patriotism. They reached Tangier on April 7, and Palermo three days later. Commander Hull—"the genial and jolly Tom Hull" the Professor called him in his letters—provided entertainment and instruction for the party, lecturing on the classic associations of every stage, and having to submit to much correction and reproof from his lively critic. At Palermo a halt was called for inspection of the beautiful city. Here the Professor summoned up all the Italian that remained to him, and talked to every man he met, greatly disconcerting the natives by his Scotch accent, and needing to help out his sentiments with gesticulation. An old man and a little girl attracted him, and after an attempt to talk to them, he filled the child's hand with coins, a language well "understanded," and which roused in the young face a rapturous wonder, as if a saint had appeared from the other world, with unaccustomed words and ways, but with celestial gifts and kindliness.

The most interesting stage was the Bay of Nauplia. Here is his description, written on April 17:—

By the grace of Commander Hull, fifty or sixty of us were deposited in Greek cabs of rotten and ragged description, fifteen in number, and rattled over the low ground at the head of the loch at a tremendous pace. Six miles of this brought us to Argos, towering up as high

as Arthur's Seat. We halted there, but as there was nothing but the graded seats of an old theatre to gaze on, we buckled ourselves stoutly for the achievement of the day. This was Mycenæ, the castled steep where once the king of men in his grandeur and glory resided, looking like a god southward over the array of mountains spotted with townships, where his lordship was recognised. This heroic citadel lies on a height of some four or five hundred feet, and though no traces of a city now exist, there are two notable monuments that, next to the colossal piles on the Nile, give the most vivid idea of the massiveness of ancient architecture—the tomb, or treasury, of Agamemnon, or both. In front of the entrance there is a long alley strongly fenced with square stones on both sides, and here I we all sat down, a various array of grey heads and gay damsels, and refreshed ourselves with a luncheon bountifully spread for us by the kindness of the captain, who honoured us by the blandness and benignity of his personal presence. Wine of course in this country was not wanting, and so the spirit moved me to stand up at the head of the banqueters and propose in good Greek a bumper to the memory of the king of men, which, of course, was responded to loudly with Ζήτω, Ζήτω, Ζήτω. After this pious recall of the Greek head of this region, we mounted up the hill about half a mile farther to another gigantic enclosure, supposed by Schliemann, I am told, to be the tomb of Clytemnestra.

Constantinople was reached on the 21st, three days having been given to Athens. He was a fortnight in the Turkish capital, partly with his fellow-voyagers, and largely with the gentlemen to whom he brought letters, and with old students who cropped up wherever Scotchmen clustered. Indeed he was passed from house to house, from banquet to banquet, from spectacle to spectacle. He went to the mosques and tombs in due succession, the slippers with which he was provided sorely incommoding him, as his vigorous movements kicked them off in the most awkward places, and some member of the party was always at his heels with the derelicts. He was not prepossessed with the Turks. He went to the Yildiz Kiosk to see the Sultan set out on his ceremonial visitation of the old mosques. There was the usual show and

glitter of military costumes and appurtenance, and he was heard to mutter, "God, who sitteth in His heaven, shall laugh."

At the end of the fortnight he took steamer for Athens, and two days brought him thither. He was invited by Mr and Mrs Ernest Gardner to stay with them at the British Archæological School, and he looked forward to this visit with ardour, hoping to see and learn much, and to work at modern Greek. But his banquetings at Constantinople sent in their direful bill, in the shape of a sudden prostrating malady, which at first looked like a fever, but proved to be merely a very violent recurrence of a constitutional ailment. He spent his time in bed, and only got well enough to return home. It was a happy coincidence for him that Dr Porter was at Athens with a patient, and that he was able and willing to take charge of the Professor not only there, but as far as Switzerland homeward. He left Lucerne for London on May 25, and for Edinburgh after a few days' rest in town.

Mrs Blackie had taken the Glebe farmhouse at Boat of Garten for the summer, and the Spey valley restored to him a measure of strength, whose precariousness he hardly appreciated. He was no sooner there than he reverted to work. Unqualified repose only depressed him. "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work," was a favourite text often quoted. He wrote out his recollections of Palermo and Constantinople for the 'People's Friend'; he completed his collection for the Greek Travelling Scholarship; he explored the course of the river Spey; he paid many visits to neighbours — to Mr and Mrs Findlay at Aberlour, to Mr Carnegie at Cluny, where he met Mr John Morley, and to Dr Martineau at Rothiemurchus. A letter from the last, dated September 12, contains so interesting a passage that it must be quoted :—

Many thanks for the 'Acropolis.' The last time I handled a Greek newspaper was in the summer of 1824, within two or three months of Byron's death at Missolonghi. Calling on Mrs Barbauld at Newington Green, I found her on her feet just taking leave of two visitors, who had brought her some message from Byron, and lingered for a few more last words. When they were gone, she asked me if I knew who they were. I was sure only that they were people of mark. They were Samuel Rogers and Sir James Mackintosh. They had brought a bundle of Greek newspapers sent by Byron just before his death in the preceding April. Mrs B. said, "They are a touching memorial; but I cannot read them: you would like perhaps to look into their contents; take them, and tell me what you find." I retain a strong impression of my interest in studying them, but cannot remember how I returned them to the dear old lady. For I never saw her again; and I think her death occurred within a year. I was still a student at college. Were I now at the same age, I should be tempted to conform to the Church of Scotland in the hope of meriting an appointment to your Greek Theological Scholarship.

That appointment was secured in the autumn to Mr Andrew Brown, highly commended by the Professors in St Andrews.

The Professor was very happy at Boat of Garten, loving its birch-wood solitudes and its bits of old forest in which Arthur and his knights might have ridden. At morning prayers a favourite paraphrase was "O God of Bethel"; but he would not conform to the text of its third line, and it was always sung—

"Who through this *pleasant* pilgrimage."

A note on September 16 records this revised version.

Early in October he was present at the celebrations of the Glenalmond Jubilee, meeting Mr and Mrs Gladstone amongst the Headmaster's guests. A brief lecturing season in London and an article in the December number of the 'Nineteenth Century,' on the translation of "Hamlet" into modern Greek by Polylas, wound up his activities for 1891.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CLOSING YEARS.

1892–1895.

THE home in Douglas Crescent had been brightened since 1890 by the presence of the Professor's nephew, Dr Stodart Walker, who filled the place of a son. But the winter began and continued with sickness and sorrow. First Mrs Blackie succumbed to influenza, then the Professor, and lastly Dr Walker.

There is a plague in the air delighting to walk in darkness [he wrote towards the end of 1891], and laying our stalwart men prostrate with a touch. It wears an Italian name, influenza, but seemingly puts forth its full vigour in a Scottish climate. Our breezy crescent here with its large outlook has not escaped the infection; my dear wife lies chained to her bed in the warm room close to the dining-room, and being under medical direction, can allow herself no freedom, as symptoms of pleuro-pneumonia have revealed themselves, which require to be carefully watched and wisely tended. As for myself, I have hitherto escaped the grasp of the fiend, for which God be thanked, and am jumping about in my usual style from east to west and from west to east, preaching the catholic gospel of philosophy, piety, poetry, and patriotism. I have sent out my first holder of the Greek Travelling Scholarship to Athens. I am happy to find my views on the study of Greek as a living language advocated by influential men in high quarters.

This letter and one immediately following were enclosed

in envelopes distinguished by a Greek motto in the left-hand corner, more rarely used than the Ἀληθεύων ἐν ἀγάπῃ known to all his correspondents. This was Χαλεπὰ τὰ καλὰ, "All best things are difficult," and was meant as a note of cheer to the receiver, who had begun the long task of chronicling his life.

He was getting frequent letters from Mr Andrew Brown, culminating in a series written in modern Greek. Before his turn of influenza came, he wrote his "Confession of Faith" for the 'Scotsman' of January 22:—

Creeds and confessions! High Church or the Low?
  I cannot say; but you would vastly please us
If with some pointed Scripture you could show
  To which of these belonged the Saviour Jesus.
I think to all or none; not curious creeds
  Or ordered forms of churchly rule He taught,
But soul of love that blossomed into deeds,
  With human good and human blessing fraught.
On me nor Priest, nor Presbyter, nor Pope,
  Bishop, or Dean may stamp a party name;
But Jesus, with His largely human scope,
  The service of my human life may claim.
Let prideful priests do battle about creeds,
The Church is mine that does most Christ-like deeds.

It is notable how, in the last years, Goethe, Aristotle, John Knox, even the Psalmist and St Paul, became less the authorities to quote, and Christ grew more and more. "Let him look in the face of Jesus Christ" was his constant comment concerning a man's character. It became the test for all kinds of conduct—in the world of politics, of business, of social life, just as much as in the world of 'creeds and confessions." Both in his letters and in his talk he confessed the Lord Jesus Christ, as he had never openly done before, potent as was Christ's influence in moulding his character. And so these closing years were marked by a gentleness, tenderness, and forbear-

ance quite distinguishable from the "equipoise" of earlier attainment.

In February, while his wife still lingered in protracted weakness,—intensified by insomnia,—the plague seized the Professor in the form of a lowering cold and cough, which put an end to the lecturing "from east to west" for that spring.

Towards the end of the month he was still enfeebled, and so depressed by the long sojourn indoors that he would not confess he was mending. But a few days later Mrs Blackie wrote: "I am glad to tell you that Pro. is every day improving in strength. He does look older, and he is feebler in walking, but his wonderful power of quiet sleeping helps him."

The interviewers were upon him this year, and the first of their illustrated casual chronicles appeared in the 'Strand Magazine' for March. It is doubtless the brightest, most spontaneous, and most sympathetic of many, and both Professor and Mrs Blackie entertained a pleasant recollection of its genial and considerate writer, Mr Harry How. It brought in its train an outbreak of requests for autographs hard to satisfy.

The turn of the tide was passed by the beginning of March, and life began to flow with accustomed pulse. On the 12th the Professor was in full cry after "Living Greek" and the Travelling Scholarship. A letter to the 'Scotsman' appeared that morning on the place of Greek in Scotland,—"a noble one, wise, patriotic, and statesmanlike," wrote Dr Donald Macleod. His fervour stormed the tardiness of the Scottish Church, and the General Assembly of the year was petitioned to secure a fund for the maintenance of the scholarship. In 1891 it had been brought for the first time to the notice of the Assembly, and received a ready sanction on condition that the founder

should himself raise the funds. That had been done for the year, and the experiment was made with unqualified success. On May 29, 1892, Dr Scott read that part of the Report which dealt with this experiment:—

> It had been found that £100 of bursary provided fairly well for six months' living and study in the heart of what was most interesting in Greece, and by study and practice of the living tongue would enable the successful student to gain a hold of the language of the New Testament and of one great section of the Early Christian Fathers, which no ordinary University curriculum at home could possibly give. The Committee accordingly suggested to the Assembly to commend it afresh to the attention of devout and intelligent persons, who had it in their power to provide for the continuance of the experiment, or give permanence to the scholarship by the method of endowment.

Professor Blackie, who met with an enthusiastic reception, then addressed the Assembly on the value of the scholarship to Greek in Scotland and to theology. On this latter point he was well qualified to speak, for since his boyhood, and the memorable interview with Dr Forbes of Old Machar, he had never spent a day without reading, translating, and pondering a passage from the Greek Testament. He had worn out many an interleaved Testament in one volume or two, and many a tiny copy, which he kept in his pocket when travelling; and he was justified in asserting that he knew the Greek Testament as well as any man alive. The proceedings ended with a vote of thanks for his great services in so successfully commencing the movement.

A month earlier he had read a paper to the members of the Royal Society of Edinburgh on the "Development of Modern Greek," and his correspondence afterwards shows its acceptance by Greeks both in England and Athens.

The event most interesting on the domestic side of his life in the month of April was his Golden Wedding, duly

celebrated on the 19th. Neither he nor Mrs Blackie was strong enough to take a leading share in the reception, but they sat side by side in the drawing-room, and the two nephews, who were as their sons, and the wife and children of one of these, contributed the active element of the home circle.

It was a bright sunny day [wrote Mrs Blackie], and the rooms looked their best, filled with the lovely colouring and scent of countless flowers. Had it not been Easter time, when so many go out of town, there would have been a crowd; as it was there was room to move about. Alec, Matilda, Grace, and Archie represented Pro.'s family. We had tea, coffee, wedding-cake, and champagne. Augusta poured out tea, and Agnes Smith did much to allow me to remain up-stairs. Every one was nicely dressed, and they beamed on us. I felt peaceful and happy. Pro. condescended to wear his best clothes, but as soon as every one had gone, he disappeared and resumed his dressing-gown and straw hat, and seemed to breathe more freely. We dined alone, the Alecs and Archie and ourselves.

Flowers, gifts, telegrams poured in all day. Early in the afternoon the members of the Hellenic Society arrived bearing a beautiful offering in the form of a great silver bowl, of the time of George III., finely chased, and inscribed on a shield with the initials of the wedded pair, the date, and "From the Hellenic Society." It was accompanied by a congratulatory address in Greek, and by a poem written for the day by Dr Walter C. Smith:—

"With silken locks of silver hair,
  He keeps a heart for ever young;
And underneath her graver air
There dwells a spirit pure and fair,
  With thoughts high-soaring and high-strung.

Light may the years upon you lie,
  Light fall their footprints on you still;
And long may ye go on to ply
The generous youth with wisdom high,
  A noble manhood to fulfil.

And as the days that lie behind,
  Whether in shadow or in sun,
So may the rest but closer bind
Both heart to heart, and mind to mind,
  Until ye perfect be in one.

And may fond memories of the past,
  Sweet as the scent of clover-field,
Hover around you to the last;
While higher, holier hopes forecast
  What the great future yet shall yield."

After this presentation a committee representing three hundred fellow-townsmen and old friends offered, through the Rev. Dr MacGregor of St Cuthbert's, the hearty congratulations of the larger community to one

of the most widely known and best beloved of living Scotchmen, and to the loving and noble wife under whose guidance he had reached that position. The other causes could be found in his splendid and various natural powers, his extensive scholarship, his great industry, his warm-hearted patriotism — an intense love of Scotland and all that is Scottish,—and to what they knew lay at the very root of his being—the love of righteousness and the fear of God.

This warm greeting was coupled with the hope that Professor Blackie would sit forthwith to Sir George Reid for a

living presentment of the man, as in his eighty-third year, hale, hearty, erect, he walked the streets of Edinburgh, its most familiar citizen,—the fine chiselled face, the intellectual head, the white hair, the hat and plaid,—and the walking-stick too.

The portrait of the man whom Scotland knew best as Sir George Reid has represented him was soon after begun, and in January 1893 it was finished and presented to Professor and Mrs Blackie for the term of their lives, and destined ultimately for the Scottish National Portrait Gallery. An etching by Mr Huth represents it as frontispiece to this biography. When the picture itself appeared

in London in the spring of 1893, it drew constant delighted recognition, and was rarely without a little crowd of onlookers.

Sir George Newnes was the recipient in May of a letter from Scotchmen in Surinam giving expression to their enjoyment of Mr Harry How's "Interview" in the 'Strand Magazine.'

I tell you [wrote Mr J. S. Blake in their name] that the account of this interview has brought tears to the eyes of many of us who have not seen him for quarter of a century—tears of joy that he is hale and healthy, and that the old ringing tones and kindly words are still to the fore. The only objection we have against the report is that it is far too short. Some of us could almost punch Mr Harry How's head for not going further and filling up the whole magazine, and this I am sure will bo the verdict of Scotchmen throughout the world.

No wonder that the object of such love grew strong with the summer months; he slept peacefully at night, and awoke refreshed and fit for many things. Amongst them was a Scottish Home Rule pamphlet called 'The Union of 1707 and its Results,' written in May and published early in June. He wrote, too, a paper on John Knox for the August 'Contemporary,' the backbone of which was a string of sonnets. His share in the Scottish Home Rule agitation was undoubtedly moved by a spurt of vivid imagination, hardly backed up by careful inquiry into the real conditions of the question. A touch of romance belongs to all fervid patriotism, and while reform is an apparent necessity, he did not stop to inquire what dangers might beset the plan of reform which he advocated. But who can wonder that he revolted against the strange insensibility of Scottish society to the worth of the Scottish character and history, and longed to restore to the scene of such heroic traditions an outward and visible dignity which should recover the respect of all.

He spent some days of June in Covenanting counties, Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire, helping to inaugurate Peden's monument at Cumnock. London was given up this year, as he and Mrs Blackie left Edinburgh for Strathspey somewhat earlier than usual. They rented a house in Kingussie for the three summer months. There, on July 28, 1892, his eighty-third birthday, Highland honours were paid to the veteran champion of the Highlanders. He had celebrated the occasion quietly at home with a luncheon-party of old friends, who gave him words of love and cheer,—and he had read to them a poem on "Old Age," in which his glad acceptance of failing strength and fuller wisdom was expressed. He was thinking of bed, when, about 9.30, he was summoned by a deputation preceded by the piper of the Kingussie volunteers. On a hill near the town blazed a great bonfire in his honour, and when he appeared at the foot, he was seized and carried up shoulder-high by some stalwart townsmen, in spite of his protest that his own legs were still in good condition. He was set down in the midst of a large gathering. The Chief Magistrate, Mr Macpherson, in the name of all, offered him congratulations on his genial old age, and the place rang with genuine Highland cheers. The Professor in his thanks alluded to the glorious record of Highland courage, and to the infinitely greater value of the men who won victories for England than of those whose main object it was to make homes desolate that grouse and deer might accumulate for sport. The chair in which he sat was then tossed into the flames, and he was permitted to walk home escorted by his friends and preceded by the piper.

Other tributes followed—a tartan plaid specially blended for him, and a book dedicated to him by Mr Andrew Brown, who, lecturing at Montrose, had reminded his hearers that the modern Greeks were devoted to our great

Phil-Hellenes past and present, and that names beloved amongst them were Byron, Gladstone, and Blackie.

The weather in August was wretched, and thwarted intended excursions; but he found compensation in Kingussie itself, where many of his friends had pitched their summer tents. He made out a visit to Laggan Manse, sacred to the memory of Mrs Grant of Laggan; and halfway through September he went to Aberlour, to follow the Spey to its mouth with his friend Mr Findlay.

Early in October he was at home again, and was mapping out his work for the winter. Sittings to Sir George Reid were frequent, and lectures in the north of England and in Edinburgh itself filled the first weeks of November. The best of these was a Sunday evening address on "Beauty in Art and Religion," given in the Synod Hall to an audience of 3000 people, under the auspices of Dr MacGregor, who introduced him as "the most famous of living Scotchmen."

Lord Tennyson's death was a shock to him, as Robert Browning's had been three years before. These men were his contemporaries, and he bowed his head in recognition that their funeral knell bade him "put his house in order." There was little to put in order in a life spent as was his, but something of the solemnity of expectation came upon him, and he often spoke of death from this time,—as coming and that soon. He spoke without regret and without the old recoil, and he looked forward to the better life continued beyond what we call death.

There can be no doubt [he wrote to Miss Pipe] that the belief in a historical Christ and a historical resurrection is the only basis on which a living certainty of life beyond the grave can be placed.

Remember [he once said to a niece just bereaved of her husband] there's no such thing as death, my dear,—there's no such thing.

But he was not hindered in doing present work by the increasing urgency of this consideration. "The devout mind," he continued, "may find perfect satisfaction in living for ever with God on this, or on the other side of the grave." He understood that eternal life is the life with God now as well as after.

On Sunday forenoons he was busy with a study of the character of King David, to take the first place in a book published at the end of 1893, and called 'Christianity and the Ideal of Humanity.' The writer spent that winter with him and Mrs Blackie, and listened to much talk on serious matters. He was more at home than usual, warned by chills which the bad weather of autumn had induced. He spent a great part of every evening in the drawing-room, supplementing his library catalogue and talking about his collection of modern Greek books. About nine o'clock he would produce the backgammon-board for the customary "rattle," and then the old vivacity would flash out, and he would stoutly assert the male superiority in all games where skill backs chance. Sometimes Mrs Blackie won a game, and then he lamented his defeat as if he had risked and lost the credit of all manhood. "What! let the hen beat you, Johnnie—for shame! for shame!" He was more patient with his guest, whom he beat with small ado. It was the immortal boyishness in his nature which took these freakish forms, for no man ever valued the feminine in humanity more, or more clearly recognised its divine function of helpfulness to men.

In the gospels [he wrote about this time] women stand prominently as the most loyal followers of Him whose sad honour it was to have been slandered by the Scribes and crucified by the priests of the age. And in the range of apostolic preaching that followed after the resurrection, in learned Athens we find that, while stern Stoics

and light Epicureans combined to meet the great Apostle with a rude "What will this babbler say?" a woman named Damaris, following in the track of a judge in the court of the Areopagus, gave her name as a member of the infant Christian Church in Athens; and from this small seed, under divine Providence, there grew up a mighty tree to which, after the lapse of nearly two thousand years, was reserved the honour of freeing the most intellectual centre of South-Eastern Europe from the desolating tyranny of the Turks.

All women who knew him acknowledged his enlarging and ennobling influence, and were the stronger, the sweeter, and the purer that he expected great things from them.

On November the 24th there was a Hellenic meeting to read the first part of "Agamemnon"; and Professor Charteris, Dr Walter C. Smith, Sheriff Nicolson, Dr Hutchison Stirling, Mr Charles Robertson, and many others were present. Only two lady members, Miss Urquhart and Miss Stirling, took part. The rites followed their prescribed course—the reading, supper, toasts of the *Hierophant* and the *Despoina*, and songs from the Professor and Sheriff Nicolson. The latter sang his beautiful "Skye Song," almost for the last time, for not many weeks after death gently summoned him.

The year was wound up with a paper on "Love, Courtship, and Marriage," for 'Work and Progress,' and another on "How to Learn a Language," for the 'Academic Review.' The new year ushered in its quota of pleasant incidents, amongst them a visit to Dr Forbes White, to inaugurate the Homeric Club of Dundee at that gentleman's house. He busied himself, too, with dispensing New Year's gifts in a fashion of his own. Each had its special dedication and character, and was wrapped in its own consecrating myth. Thus he laid before the writer, still a guest at 9 Douglas Crescent, a packet inscribed by angels in the Greek of Paradise, who appeared to him in a wakeful hour of the night, and intrusted him with the gift.

It contained £5 in an inner envelope, which bore the lines :—

> Money, which burns the fingers of a fool
> Who blindly blunders,
> Is to the knowing hand a ready tool
> Which works great wonders.

And the angelic Greek outside ran thus :—

> Τῇ σεβαστῇ παρθένῳ
> Ἄννᾳ Κρατερόφρονι,
> οἱ, ἐν τῷ ὑψίστῳ οὐρανῷ,
> ἀγγελοὶ εὐ πράττειν.

When he sent books to his friends, each bore a definite inscription, recording some characteristic or recalling some association connected with the friend whom it addressed. Indeed he carried this habit to the height of an art, no single inscription resembling another, even of many offered to the same person, and yet each having its special meaning for the recipient. The presentation of the Golden Wedding picture belonged to January, as well as work at the papers of which his last book was compiled. He was corresponding with theological friends on the accurate reading of certain passages in St Peter's epistles, one of which he prefixed as motto to the chapter on "St Paul and the Epistle to the Romans."

About the middle of April the long rest from lecturing had sufficiently renewed his strength to enable him to go South for three weeks. He had a carriage to himself nearly all the way to King's Cross, and relieved his solitude by singing Scottish songs. He spent the first week with Dr and Mrs Kennedy at Hampstead, but was not able for the usual whirl of engagements. He made some calls, spoke at a Scottish Home Rule meeting, and lunched with Mr Barrie, whom he liked. Short visits to Oxford and Cambridge on the business of his "Living Greek"

propaganda, with gratifying response at the more open-minded University, wound up his holiday, and he returned to Edinburgh in time for the General Assembly's deliberations on the Greek Travelling Scholarship. The minutes record this year's resolution :—

The General Assembly cordially thank Professor Blackie for the renewed indication of his warm interest in the Scholarship which bears his name; approve of the suggestion that, with his consent, its scope should be widened so as to embrace Greek and Bible lands; and authorise Professor Cowan and Dr Nicol, with the assistance of such others as they may associate with them, to take charge of the matter and to make an appeal on its behalf to the sympathy and support of friends of the Church desirous of furthering the interests of Biblical scholarship among her students.

This proposal of a wider scholarship included Arabic and acquaintance with both Palestine and Egypt, to supplement for the study of the Old what Professor Blackie desired to do for that of the New Testament, and suggested Athens and Beyrout as two centres of residence. An appeal was drafted and distributed by the Sub-Committee to make the aim of the Scholarship widely known, and it met with response sufficiently liberal to enable the General Assembly of 1894 to sanction a competition held in September. The Scholarship was gained by Mr John Duncan, M.A., a graduate (with honours in Classics) of Aberdeen and a Divinity student, who received £150 on condition of spending three months in Greece and six months in countries where Arabic is spoken. This he did, spending two months in Egypt, where he assisted in some of Dr Flinders Petrie's excavations.

Professor and Mrs Blackie took a cottage on the heights above Pitlochry for the summer months, going to it on July 1, 1893. He was "well and serene," but found the climb to and from Pitlochry rather too tiring for daily effort; and although the spell of Ben Vrackie was always

on him, he missed the friendly neighbours and gossip of Kingussie. On his eighty-fourth birthday Pitlochry did him Highland honour, with bonfire, dancing, and speeches on the knoll before his cottage; and he enjoyed the crowd and its kindly acclamations. During the last weeks of their stay at Balghoulan, a valued friend of later years was their neighbour, Miss Molyneux of Tom-na-monachan, and she brightened the solitude which oppressed him in July. For except in his study and in the long walks of more vigorous years, when companionship rather fretted than pleased him, he loved to be surrounded by human faces, and delighted in the glimpses of character which they revealed. The glorious summer compensated partly for the isolation of their quarters, and they could sit out of doors or wander about in peace. A visit to Mrs Glassford Bell at Tirinie, near Aberfeldy, plunged him into the lively social atmosphere which he liked, and recruited by rest he managed to get half-way up Schiehallion, although with difficulty. He was waylaid by a party of climbers, with whom he lunched, and then descended.

It was not wise, however, and he returned to Balghoulan badly colded and enfeebled. The Highlands sent him back to the study of Gaelic, which he pursued in Edinburgh on his return, weaving his reading and observations into a short bright article for 'Blackwood's Magazine,' called "Glimpses of Church and Social Life in the Highlands in Olden Times." Other researches of the summer led to a paper on "Place-Names" accepted by Dr Macleod for the November 'Good Words.'

He was very far from well during the late autumn, but revived for "talking tramps," which lasted intermittently the whole winter. No persuasion would induce him to give these up, although he returned from them white and chilled and numb, sometimes too fatigued to speak.

An interest of the year's close was his book, 'Christianity and the Ideal of Humanity.' The copy which he sent to the writer bears this inscription besides her name, "With the hope that she may recognise in this book the ethical ideal, on which one of the oldest of her dear father's friends has now for more than sixty years humbly endeavoured to frame his mortal life."

This little volume, published by Mr David Douglas, contains six chapters—on David, King of Israel; on Christian Unity; on Wisdom; on Women, from which the closing sentences have already been quoted; on St Paul and the Epistle to the Romans; and on the Scottish Covenanters.

The chapter on Women contains his suggestions for their perfect development as women, in obedience to God's intention for them, and should be read by all.

Letters, gratefully acknowledging his services to his country and to individuals, abound bearing this winter's date: he was a prophet who received abundant honour from his own people.

An extract from a letter dated Aberdeen, 15th January 1894, shows that he began the new year with a revival of strength and energy. He lectured there with much acceptance on Tuesday the 16th, his subject being "Education and the Age," and spent some days with Dr and Mrs M'Clymont at 5 Queen's Gardens:—

Yesterday I went twice to church; in the forenoon to the College, where I marched in as part of the academical square caps, and had my seat on the left hand of the Principal accordingly. The preacher was Principal Fairbairn of the Dissenters' College, Oxford, who preached most excellently on the moral conquest of the world by Christ's army. After service I lunched with Professor Cowan, one of the best of my old students, and then drove back to the extreme west end of Aberdeen. In the evening we had a sermon specially addressed to the young men of the Association by Mr Ranken of Irvine, a discourse combining large human sympathies with special Christian grace and a broad sweep of social wisdom.

On the 15th he

lunched with Sir Principal Geddes and a few of his learned colleagues, besides some female wanderers. The Principal was bland and gracious, and the lady comported herself in every way worthy of a sister of John Forbes White. After food and talk, we drove over to Marischal College and heard Dr Fairbairn, as Gifford Lecturer, deliver an interesting and thoroughly learned lecture on Buddhism. We then came home, and at dinner had the same intelligent Dissenter in a more familiar presentation. He is really one of the largest-minded men that I have ever met. We were very jovial and hearty, and the Pro., by special entreaty, sang no less than three songs,—"Jenny Geddes," "Sam Sumph," and the "Bonnie House o' Airlie."

When he returned to Edinburgh he found awaiting him a letter from Professor Angelo Scuppa of Norcia, asking permission to translate 'Self-Culture' into Italian. This, as well as several requests from students in different parts of India, who desired to add it to the literature of their various vernaculars, closed the list of such proposals during his lifetime. Professor Scuppa completed the task in time to send him copies before Christmas; and one of the latest occupations of 1894 was the slow penning of inscriptions in these copies for the few friends to whom he sent them. His wife received the first, and the writer was one of those to whom this version of 'Self-Culture' was his last gift.

Many good books you have written [wrote Dr Flint on January 30], and many good works you have done, and all men love you well and wish you well.

And about the same time Mr Webster of the University Library acknowledged his photograph in loving words:—

You are, by the grace of God, one of the joy-makers of the world. I have often wished to let you know the gratitude (and yet that is not the word) which I have felt towards you since I was one of your boys.

There was too much "going to and fro" that winter, and on February 20 Mrs Blackie wrote: "Pro. is sleeping badly, and looking fagged." Quick recovery had always characterised his constitution, and he was slow to understand that the spirit to do things did not include the strength sufficient, so that we find him lecturing in March and even in April, and writing long and vigorous letters to the 'Scotsman' on two subjects—Disestablishment and the Greek Travelling Scholarship. On the former he appealed to his old test, Aristotle's golden mean, as opposed to the declaration of war against the Scottish Established Church, "which has become the stamp of national independence, and stands erect on its own base as free from any interference on the part of the State as in the days of the Apostle Paul and the early Fathers." This letter appeared on March 21, and was evoked by a point in Lord Rosebery's speech in the Corn Exchange a few days earlier. With all the other points in that speech he was in sympathy, but he deprecated assault on the National Church of Scotland.

In April Mrs Blackie fell ill. Her malady meant great suffering. One Sunday, the last in April, he was standing at the foot of her bed while a prolonged spasm of acute pain seized her, and his grief and pity brought on him an attack of cardiac asthma. His wife saw him suddenly beating the air with his hands to recover breath. It was the first step of the ten months' decline, and was followed by another attack three days later. Dr Foulis kept him in his bedroom and called to see him twice a-day, and he recovered by the end of the week, although much enfeebled and depressed. Dr George Balfour was consulted, and gave it as his opinion that the heart was overtaxed, and that there must be no more lecturing nor public speaking. It was a case of

"senile heart," and the least exertion might bring back the asthma. For the first time his wife could not be with him to tend him as she alone knew how to do, and this retarded her recovery, although she was kept in ignorance of the gravity of his attacks. But his nephew, Dr Stodart Walker, saw all instructions as to diet and rest carefully carried out; and he was nursed by the affectionate maid-servants who had for many years been valued members of his household, and who considered themselves neither day nor night when his comfort was in question. "We're awfu' attached to the maister," said one of them, and they showed their attachment by unwearied and most unselfish tendance. By May 29 he was so far well as to come down to breakfast and to read prayers. Mrs Blackie was getting better too, and together the two invalids took a daily drive for an hour at most.

The writer was in Edinburgh about the middle of June, and dined one Sunday at 9 Douglas Crescent. A great change had come over the alert, buoyant, vigorous Professor. He was thin and pale and aged. His talk was very gentle, and he was much interested in an account of Cavaliere Capellini's work amongst the soldiers of Italy. He said, "If he teaches them to look in the face of Christ, then all the foolish formalism will fall off, and the Italians will learn the Christ life." Next day he wrote, "I think Capellini's work worthy of all praise, and enclose a guinea as my subscription to the Military Church."

Although his public speaking was ended, his pen was busy with no fewer than five articles for July magazines,—on "Place-Names of Scotland" for 'Blackwood' amongst them; but, alas! three more attacks of cardiac asthma towards the end of the month prostrated him completely. He was confined to bed and closely nursed,

and by July 2 he was able to be removed to Pitlochry in an invalid carriage, with his nephew, Dr Stodart Walker, as medical attendant. Mrs Blackie had secured Tom-na-monachan cottage for the summer months. Here he slowly revived, and crept daily to a seat in Miss Molyneux's garden, where he could rest and look on Ben Vrackie. By-and-by he could stand a short drive, and when his old friend Mr Gladstone came to Fisher's Hotel, he drove down to call on him, and roused his spirit to battle when the great statesman rather slighted Socrates and confessed to sympathy with Xanthippe, who must indeed have been bored at times. Dr Stodart Walker, who was present, describes the interview. "The conversation drifted on to more general ground, and Gladstone said, 'We are both getting on in life now, Blackie, though I should fancy you are the younger man.' 'No,' said Blackie, 'I can give you five months and Tennyson nearly two. We were all born in 1809.' 'Ah, but,' said the G. O. M., 'the gentle poet is not to be included with two such disturbing elements as you and me, Blackie!'" A fortnight of the peaceful cottage revived the Professor wonderfully, and he ventured on July 17 to come down-stairs to breakfast, to read prayers himself, and, too daring, to climb the hill to Balghoulan in the afternoon. A lively rubber of whist completed the day's doings, and at 1.30 A.M. he paid the penalty in the form of a very bad asthmatic attack. This was followed by others, and he was again confined to his room, weak and ailing. It was an agitating time for all, but by the beginning of August he was so far better as to write letters and to make out his slow walk to the garden-seat.

On July 28 Miss Molyneux decorated the cottage in honour of his eighty-fifth birthday, and also sent him a beautifully carved lion, eighty-five roses—one for each year

—and a tender tribute of verse, entitled "The Happy Warrior."

"For him who through a faithful life
The path of duty bravely chose,
Beauty has blossomed out of strife,
And every year has borne its rose.

So greet we thee, beloved and true,
With roses fairest of the fair;
Such sweetness is the warrior's due,—
Such garlands may a victor wear.

With lips attuned and hearts aglow,
We bless the day that gave thee birth,—
That sent thee forth through weal and woe
To lift a standard high on earth.

And thou, whate'er the future bring,
Canst view it with untroubled brow,
Still journeying on to meet thy King,
And live His servant then as now."

A bonfire on the hill behind Tom-na-monachan closed the celebrations; but the Professor was not able to be present, and his thanks were spoken by Dr Stodart Walker.

A letter to his sister, Mrs Kennedy, bears for date August 5, and may be quoted:—

Shortly after your letter, the 28th July arrived, and the good old Scot of fourscore years and five was forthwith overwhelmed by an epistolary storm of birthday greetings that demanded an immediate grateful acknowledgment. Really, I seem to have done some good to my fellow-countrymen; but exaggeration in matters that touch the public pulse, especially in the case of an octogenarian, is natural, and I must tone it down to something of a more modest estimate. I feel great weakness, and, in fact, only half alive. Perfect recovery from such a radical weakness of function at my time of life is contrary to nature; and I will address myself to a pious curtailment of all hopes and fears and ambitions belonging to this sublunary sphere.

After the July attacks he had rest for at least two months. When the writer reached Tom-na-monachan

towards the end of August, he had picked up strength sufficient for a quiet round of daily interests. He was eating with better appetite, and sleeping more soundly, so that the bright temper with its normal hopefulness had returned. Snatches of psalm and song resounded through the house, and at night over a rubber of whist he grew bellicose and noisy. He presented his guest with the 'Greek Primer,' and gave her a first lesson out of the Gospel of St John, exacting a promise that she would learn Greek. He was busy with Gibbon's 'Decline and Fall,' reading it through for the first time, and astonished at its monumental character. The subject displeased him, however, for he preferred the building up to the breaking up of a great State. On Sundays he read the 'Life of Wilberforce.' When a friend of academic education came to see him, he talked of Greek, ancient and modern, all the time. At intervals in the day he penned a letter or two in answer to unknown correspondents, who hurled all sorts of questions at him, from "What is the origin of evil?" downwards. Constantly in his talk recurred that counsel of perfection: "Look Christ in the face; in all doings note what Christ did in like circumstances, and do as He would have done on earth."

Once, calling on Mrs Glassford Bell at Baledmund, he insisted, against all advice, on singing "Get up an' bar the door," with great energy, — dramatic, not vocal, for the notes were feeble. It was the first time that he had sung a Scottish song since the spring. On August 29 he had the pleasant news from Mr Douglas that a second edition of 'Christianity and the Ideal of Humanity' was called for. By that time he was strong enough to come to breakfast and to read prayers. His last social appearance at Pitlochry was at an afternoon party given by Miss Molyneux, where he read aloud his "Farewell to Ben

Vrackie," sent afterwards to 'Maga'—his last contribution to that magazine, and written on the seat to which he made his slow way every day.

On the last day of the month he was taken back to Edinburgh in an invalid carriage, and was well enough on his return to make calls near at hand, and to write a lengthy letter to the 'Scotsman' of September 10 on the "Threefold Order." But the weakness was increasing, and sleeplessness once more set in. He tossed about restlessly, sometimes singing and lecturing in his snatches of perturbed sleep; but he was not depressed, as in the first stages of his long illness. Towards the end of September the cardiac asthma returned, and three attacks quickly followed each other, leaving him always more or less enfeebled: still the mind was clear, and although he had to dictate most of his letters, he was able to grapple with all their subjects, and sent another long letter to the 'Scotsman,' this time on the Greek Travelling Scholarship.

Unfortunately he was tempted to try the little strength that returned towards the middle of October by going to the inaugural lecture of the History Class in the University, and by making calls. This brought further weakness, and in November he was limited to the dining-room, where he sat, or lay, and received many visitors. A look of great age had come upon him, and his friends could hardly restrain their tears when they saw him. He would point to Sir George Reid's portrait and say, "That's Blackie, not this." He would apologise to ladies for not being able to open the door for them. Strong men sobbed as well as women when they left him. Henry Irving was one of these visitors, and stooped to kiss his brow as he bade him good-bye. The Professor took the great actor's hand and kissed it.

A letter from Dr George MacDonald reached him about the middle of November.

The shadows of the evening that precedes a lovelier morning are drawing down around us both [he wrote], but our God is in the shadow as in the shine, and all is and will be well: have we not seen His glory in the face of Jesus? and do we not know him a little?—Good-bye for a little while. I have loved you ever since I knew you, for you loved the truth.

On Sunday, December 9, Mr Lees of Boleside, Galashiels, paid him a last visit.

The Professor and Mrs Blackie were alone in the dining-room, he in his arm-chair beside the fire. I conveyed my wife's sympathy, which led him to talk, as he always did, about her with agreeable interest. I mentioned another invalid whom I had just seen, who was fretting that he had not got into the fresh air. The Professor said: "No man was ever more active than myself. But I fret not: I complain not. God has been very good to me during all these years; and here I sit waiting His coming and ready for His call." When I rose to go, extending my hand, I bade him good-bye. I had felt it would be my last interview with him. He took my hand in both of his and clasped it once or twice, and with some tearful emotion he bade me good-bye. "Yes, good-bye," he said; "remember my messages to your wife,"—and as I went towards the door I heard a blessing following me.

Later in the month the Professor wrote with his own hand to Dr R. F. Horton two long letters on the inspiration of St Paul's writings, with full mental vigour, but they were scarcely legible. Warm regard for his correspondent is expressed in these letters, although they are too strictly on theological matters for quotation.

On both the 6th and the 20th of December the Hellenic Society met at his house. The members were reading the "Prometheus Bound," and he busied himself beforehand in preparing the play. Dr Forbes White was present at the last meeting, and writes: "The old man was still alert and keen in intellect, and more genial and lovable than ever.

Next morning he was fresh and bright, arranging for the next meeting."

On Christmas-day he insisted upon a luncheon-party. "He sat in his big chair, while nine friendly people lunched and chattered. He wanted this small affair carried out." But that evening the asthma returned and lasted sixteen hours, so that next day he could speak but one word at a time, and then sleep returned and a little appetite. "His weakness is pitiable, and the mind remaining very active, he wonders why he can do so little. He has given up writing altogether." On New Year's Day Mrs Blackie wrote:—

A sort of rally has come; yesterday we got him out of his room. He sat in great comfort for three hours—much wrapped up,—and had after that a long night of sleep. We had prayers beside him at his request, and since that he has again slept. Such changes occur in his feelings of ease and the dreadful unease of weakness, that we never know what to look for. Archie and Bella continue to watch him by day and by night, and Dr Balfour had a good verdict to give, so just at this moment I am more comfortable.

About the middle of February his sister, Mrs Walker, arrived to give that tender help which Mrs Blackie knew she could expect from one whose life had been devoted to unselfish motherly care.

From his bedroom on the ground-floor to the dining-room and back again was all the change now possible. He lay very silent, often not speaking for hours. A touch of bronchitis was added to the other symptoms, but he was active in certain directions, still writing some letters very slowly, and dictating others to his wife and to a cousin, who came to be with them. A neighbour, Mrs Miller Morison, often read aloud to him, and after a good night he read for an hour or two himself. He had never used spectacles, and did not require them now. The straw

hat was discarded, and a soft velvet scholar's cap took its place. Froude's 'Erasmus' and 'Beside the Bonnie Brier-Bush' were the last books read aloud to him, and he had the pleasure of seeing "Ian Maclaren" one evening. "He popped in as we sat at dinner, a big, grave, well-mannered man. He found time to tell us his method of working, and Pro. and he fraternised pleasantly."

'Erasmus' occupied and stimulated his mind, so that he dictated two papers upon his life and work for the 'People's Friend,' the first of which appeared on February 18. In the New Year number there had appeared some lines and a short paper on Father Sarpi,—and he had also been able to contribute an article on "The Natural Method of Teaching" to the 'Contemporary Review' for February. His thoughts were often occupied with the Greek Travelling Scholarship. He dictated, and even wrote, many letters on the subject to Professor Cowan, to Sir Arthur Mitchell, and to others. With the new year came the determination to make the fund, as far as modern Greek went, a realisation; and he saw Sir Arthur Mitchell frequently about the clause in his will affecting this provision. He was urgent that the Church of Scotland should raise the fund of £5000 to provide for the wider scholarship, and so restore to the Scottish Church a high standard of classical and Biblical training. But to make sure for the University of Edinburgh the advantage of the Greek Scholarship, he left £2500, to be devoted in due time to its perpetual realisation, limiting the candidature to theological students of that University. The bequest secures the eventual fulfilment of the desire of his heart.

On February 2 he wrote to his friend Mr Blackwood, offering "to dash off a short article, not above six pages, with the title 'Is Greek a Dead Language?'"—and gibing in the old fashion at Oxonian conservatism. This article

was never written. Later in the month, he engaged in a correspondence with his friend and colleague of many years, Professor Campbell Fraser, upon the philosophy of the Scholiasts and the exact value of the term *Realism*. This train of thought and inquiry belonged to his study of 'Erasmus.'

All February he received letters from scholars of different Universities full of appreciation of his efforts both for Greek and for reformed methods of teaching. Mr George Seton saw him on the 20th of February for about five minutes, and before he left the old man suddenly said with energy, "People are beginning to discover that there is a good deal of truth in many of Blackie's fads."

Two days after he was no longer able to leave his bedroom. He lay, suffering neither pain nor restlessness, but the bodily powers were failing, and he looked already like a spirit. Even then he thought of others rather than of himself, and would break long spells of silence to bid his nephew rest. "Go to bed, boy; you require sleep." When the asthma returned he would say, "Close the door that Oke mayn't hear."

"I never saw or heard anything in all the days of his illness," wrote Dr Stodart Walker, "that was not worthy of a true gentleman and follower of Christ."

Sir Arthur Mitchell saw him a few days before the end, and describes the interview :—

He spoke with force and earnestness of his patriotic desire to raise the scholarship of the Scottish Church, with the view not only of adding to its dignity, but of increasing its usefulness in the deepest and best sense. He had also much to say of 'Erasmus.' And I remember feeling how much his words, even when he allowed himself to be somewhat unrestrained and vehement, tended to make those hearing them better men, larger-hearted, fuller of truth and love. He was quite bright and happy. When leaving him I said, "Good-bye, most pleasant friend,—patriot, poet, and philosopher."

"Then you have not forgotten," he quickly said. Long years ago he had told me that he would like to be so remembered.

It was on February 27 that Dr Forbes White saw him for the last time.

As he wakened from his sleep he took me by the hand and said, "'Αληθεύων ἐν ἀγάπῃ: *agappe*, do you hear?" with a humorous glance. "Speaking the truth in love, in love." Then his thoughts seemed to wander on the same lines. "The sun gives light and heat; light for knowledge, heat for love."

Other old friends saw him — Professor Adam Smith, Sir Noël Paton, Dr Walter C. Smith, Dr Cameron Lees, Dr MacGregor, Sheriff Vary Campbell, General Forlong, and Professor Masson, an academic colleague valued and congenial.

He talked at long intervals of the songs of Burns and of the Psalms of David; and the 19th Psalm, the first that he learnt in childhood, was the last upon his lips.

On Friday, March 1, before he became unconscious, his nephew repeated to him all his favourite mottoes, and he smiled at each. When Dr Walker came to "speaking the truth in love," he murmured, "Remember, my boy, the Greek word means acting too."

His wife came into the room and bent over him. "Do you know your old Oke?" she said, and he answered, "I have always loved her." He bade her, his sister Mrs Walker, and his nephew a last farewell, kissing his wife again and again and saying, "You were always a good and faithful Oke;" and later in the day he was heard to murmur, "Oke, Oke," when he was nearly unconscious. For some hours he lay, and then waking for a few minutes, he uttered his last words on earth: "The Psalms of David and the songs of Burns, but the Psalmist first," and with a smile, and repeating

"Psalms, poetry," he passed again into unconsciousness, which lasted till the next morning at a quarter to ten o'clock, when he gently breathed his last. Death had no triumph in that passage into immortality.

It was on Saturday, March 2, that John Stuart Blackie died, eighty-five years and seven months old; and on Wednesday, March 6, he was buried with such honours as were due to the scholar, the reformer, the warrior, the patriot, and the Christian.

For the intervening days he lay in the dining-room, wrapped in a black plush dressing-gown and crimson sash, with the black velvet cap on his head and flowers heaped up around him. Working men, Highland students, poor women, trudged long distances to look upon his ethereal face, and all were admitted.

The first to send a message of loving and reverential sorrow was Lord Rosebery, himself upon a bed of sickness; then they came in ever-increasing numbers from all parts of the kingdom.

How is it possible truly to describe his funeral? Not the simple pageantry of procession and Presbyterian ceremonial; not the last honours paid by academic and scientific bodies; not the tread of mourners from city and burgh, from northern solitude and southern glen; not the music in the Cathedral and the wild lament of the Highland pipers; not the measured stateliness of that long train,—not these alone, but the outburst of affection from tens of thousands who were not called upon to share the burden of befitting grief; the shepherds wrapped in plaids with bowed heads by the wayside; the women who kissed the bier that bore him, and begged for a flower from the heap upon his coffin; the men, noble and simple, who sobbed as they watched it pass; the tears of a multitude

of poor, who loved him because he first loved them,—these were his funeral's unbidden and unmarshalled pomp.

For those who were not there [wrote Professor Patrick Geddes in 'The Scots Renascence'] the scene is wellnigh as easy to picture as for us to recall; the wavy lane, close-walled with drawn and deepened faces, the long black procession marching slow, sprinkled with plaid and plume, crowded with college cap and gown, with civic scarlet and ermine, marshalled by black-draped maces. In the midst, the Black Watch pipers marching their slowest and stateliest —then the four tall black-maned horses, the open bier, with plain unpolished oaken coffin high upon a pyramid of flowers, a mound of tossing lilies, with Henry Irving's lyre of violets "To the Beloved Professor," its silence fragrant at its foot. Upon the coffin lay the Skye women's plaid, above his brows the Prime Minister's wreath, but on his breast a little mound of heather opening into bloom.

The heather was laid there by his nephew, Archie Walker; and beside it lay another honoured wreath, given to their dear master by the devoted maids, Bella, Annie, and Blair.

In the Cathedral, Dr Cameron Lees, Dr Flint, Dr Story (the Moderator), and Dr Walter C. Smith took part in the service, and then joined the slow progress through the crowds. Nine Black Watch pipers from the Castle played in succession "The Land o' the Leal," the "Flowers o' the Forest," and "Lochaber no more" in front of the bier. And at the grave in the Dean Cemetery, when all were gathered in their places, Dr Walter C. Smith prayed:—

O God, our Father in heaven, it is with sad, sorrowing hearts that we lay all that can perish of our beloved friend in the grave, in the sure and certain hope of a blessed resurrection. Sad and sorrowful as this day is, yet it is not unmixed with much that gladdens us, turning sorrow into sweetness. We give Thee thanks, O God, that we ever knew him. We give Thee thanks for all the sweet fellowship we had together; for the sweetness of his hearty counsel, which remains as perfume and as ointment with us. We give Thee thanks

for his varied and manifold labours during his manhood—labours carried on to the last of a long life; and we give Thee thanks for the Christian faith, for the sweet meekness, for the tranquil hopefulness of his last days among us. Bless the Lord, O our souls. And, O God, grant that, as we remember these things, and remember all the pureness, the unworldliness, the simplicity, and the sincerity of this faithful man, we may be lifted up to walk in his footsteps, to follow him in his faith. One day we trust to find these broken bonds knit up before Thee in heaven, where there is no more parting, and where God shall wipe away all tears from our eyes. God bless those dear to him. Lord grant that she whom he has left alone may not be alone, may be never alone, and may be never without Thee. May God sustain and comfort her in this day of bereavement. Hear us for Jesus' sake. Amen.

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